

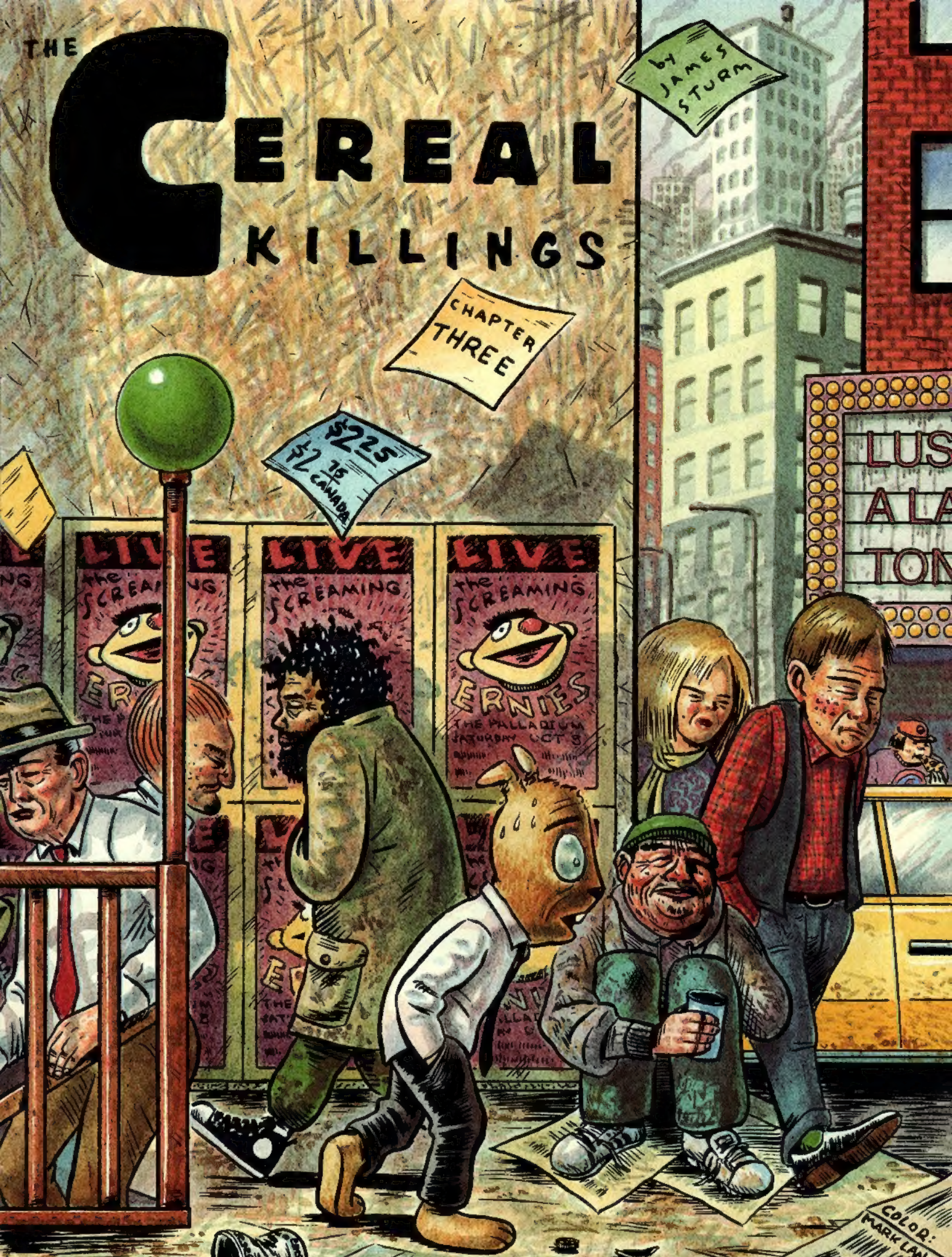
THE

CEREAL KILLINGS

by JAMES STURM

CHAPTER THREE

\$2.25
\$2.15 CANADA



PLUS: A
BASEBALL
Story



THE

C

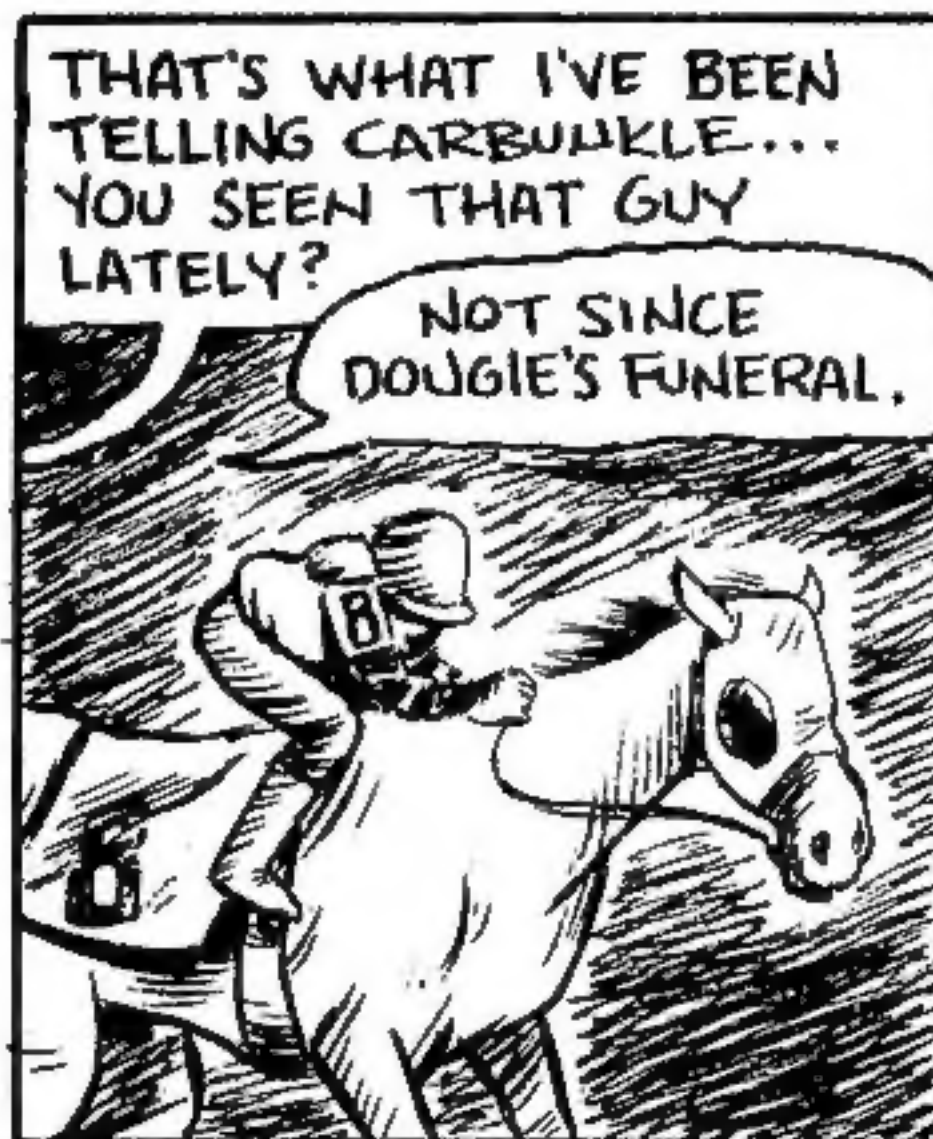
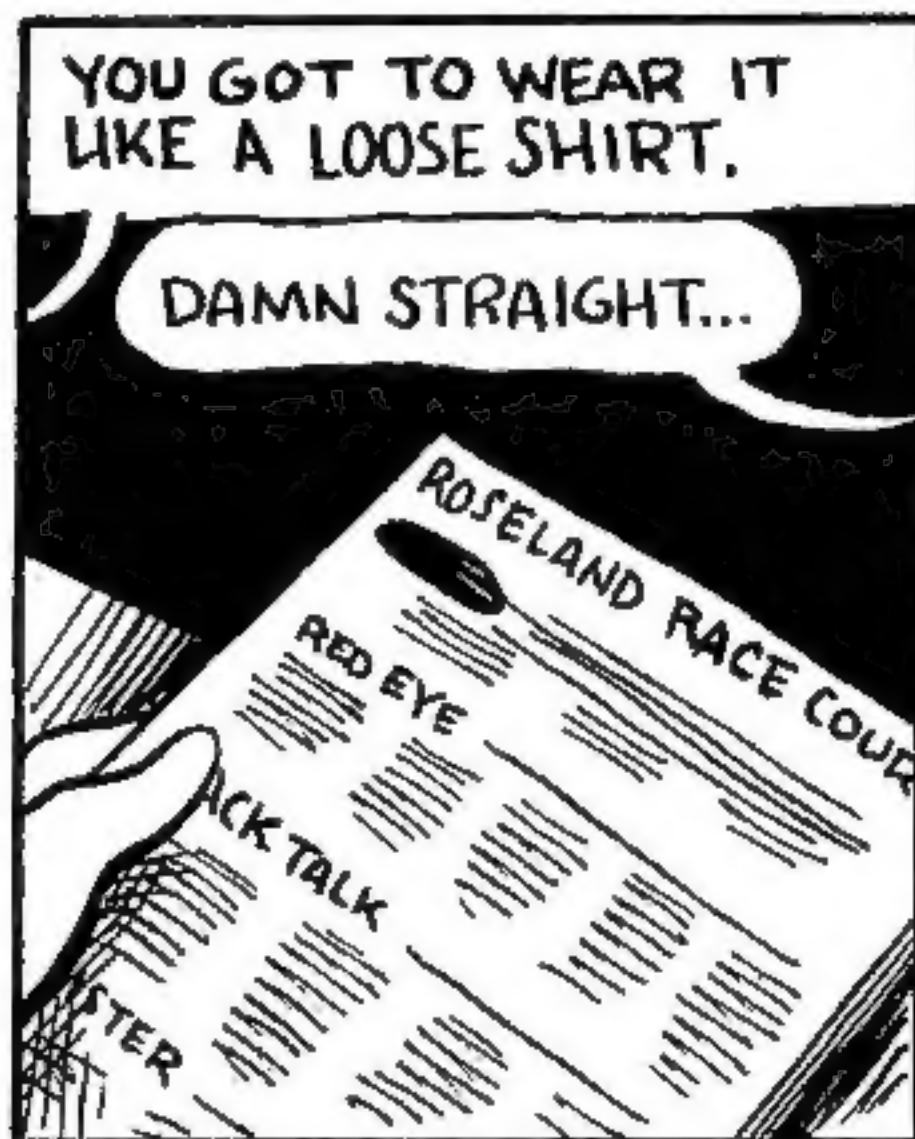
EREAL KILLINGS

CHAPTER THREE: LOST CAUSES



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GO BABY!



C'MON YOU BUM!



AW JEEZ...



OH FUCK.



EASY COME, EASY GO. IT'S LIKE MY UNCLE MORRIS USED TO SAY...

NOT NOW, BURT I GOT TO THINK.



WHO'S RUNNING IN THE SIXTH?

WHADAYA SAY WE CALL IT QUILTS, SHIRLAND, GRAB A FEW FRANKS?



I'D LOVE TO, BURT, BUT I'M GOING TO STICK AROUND. WHY DON'T YOU SPLIT.

SUIT YOURSELF.

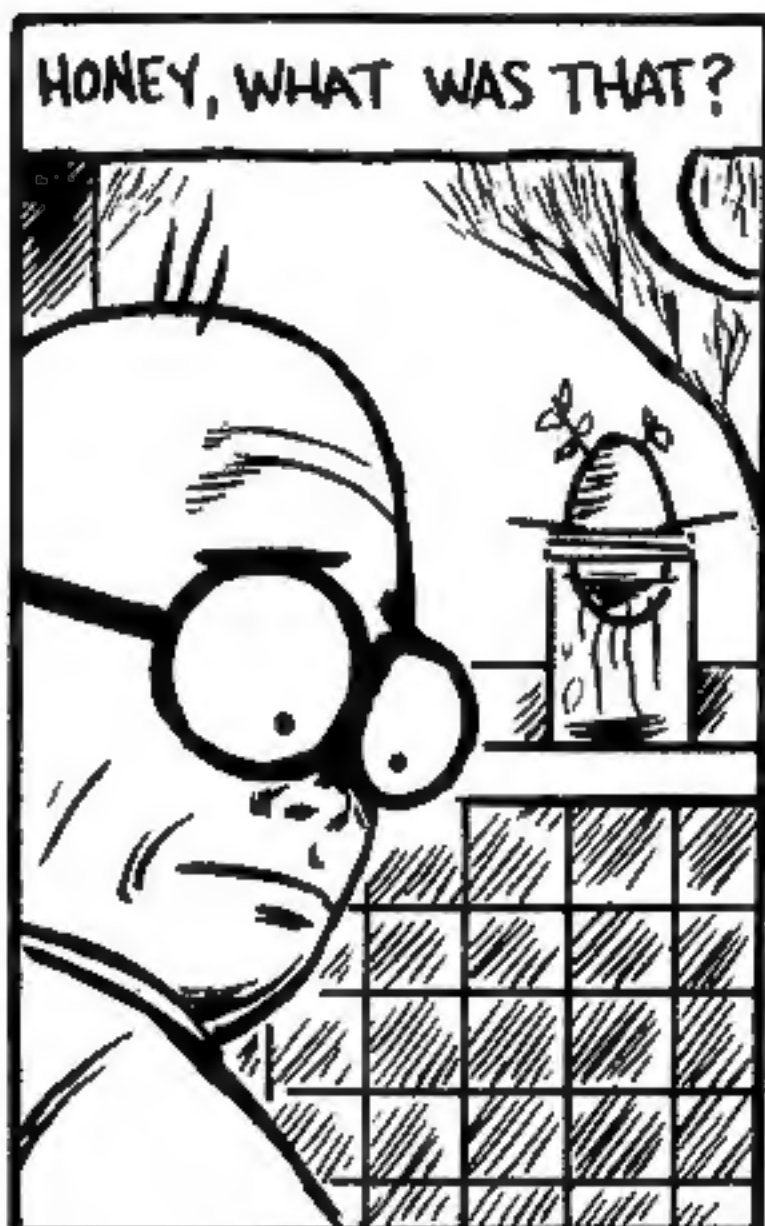
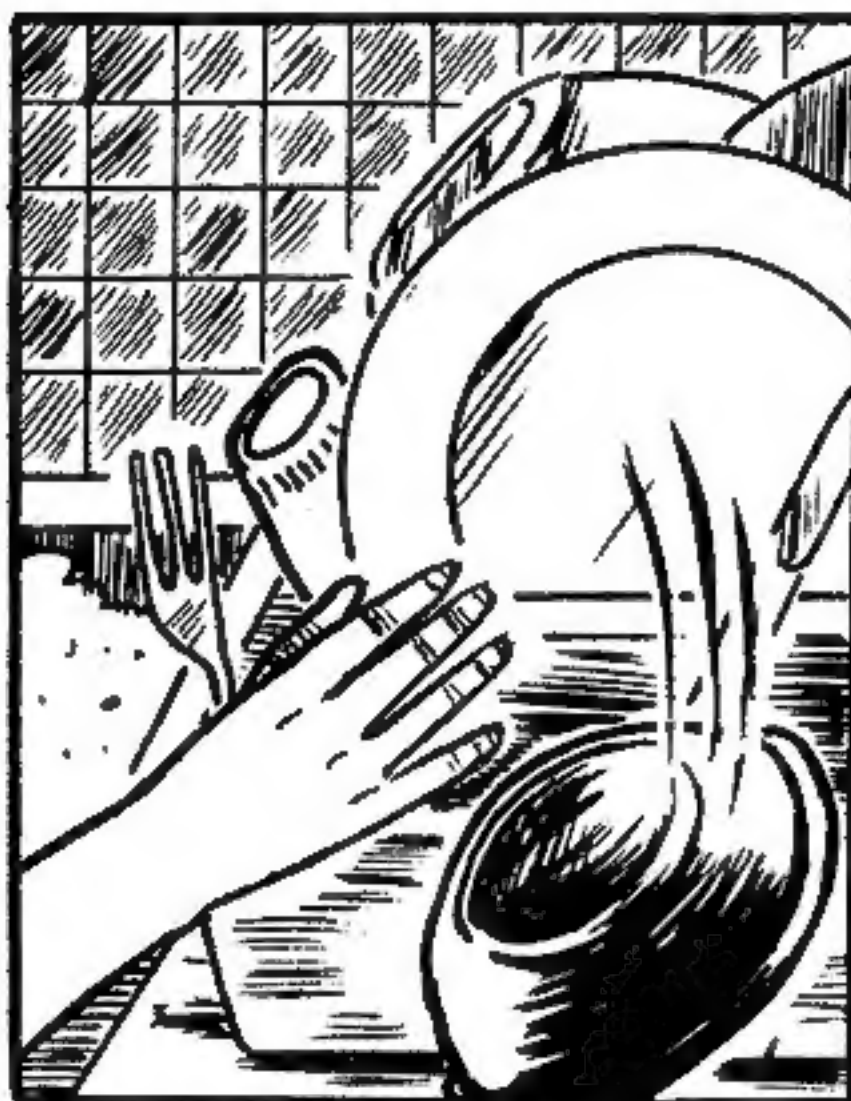


BUT THANKS, BURT, YOU WERE A REAL PICK-ME-UP.

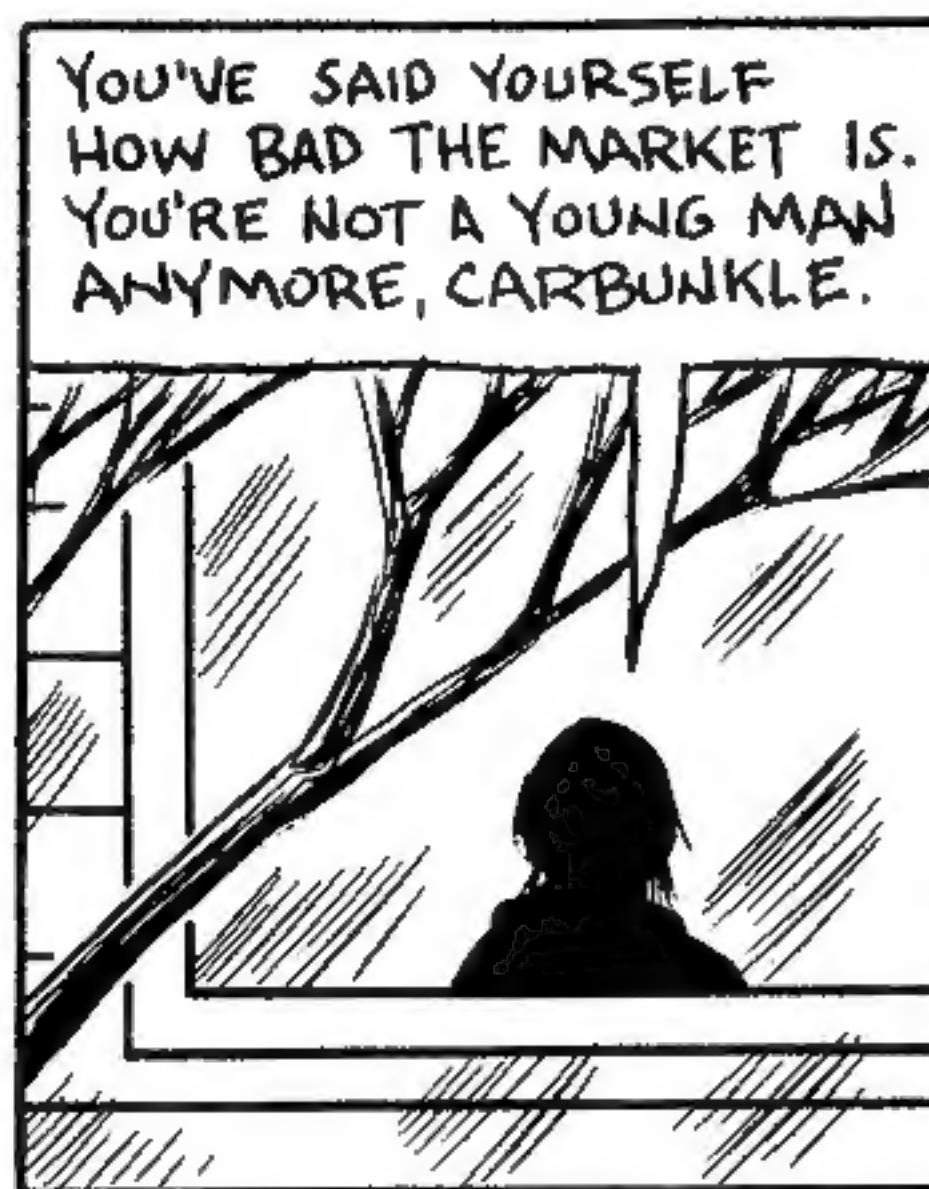
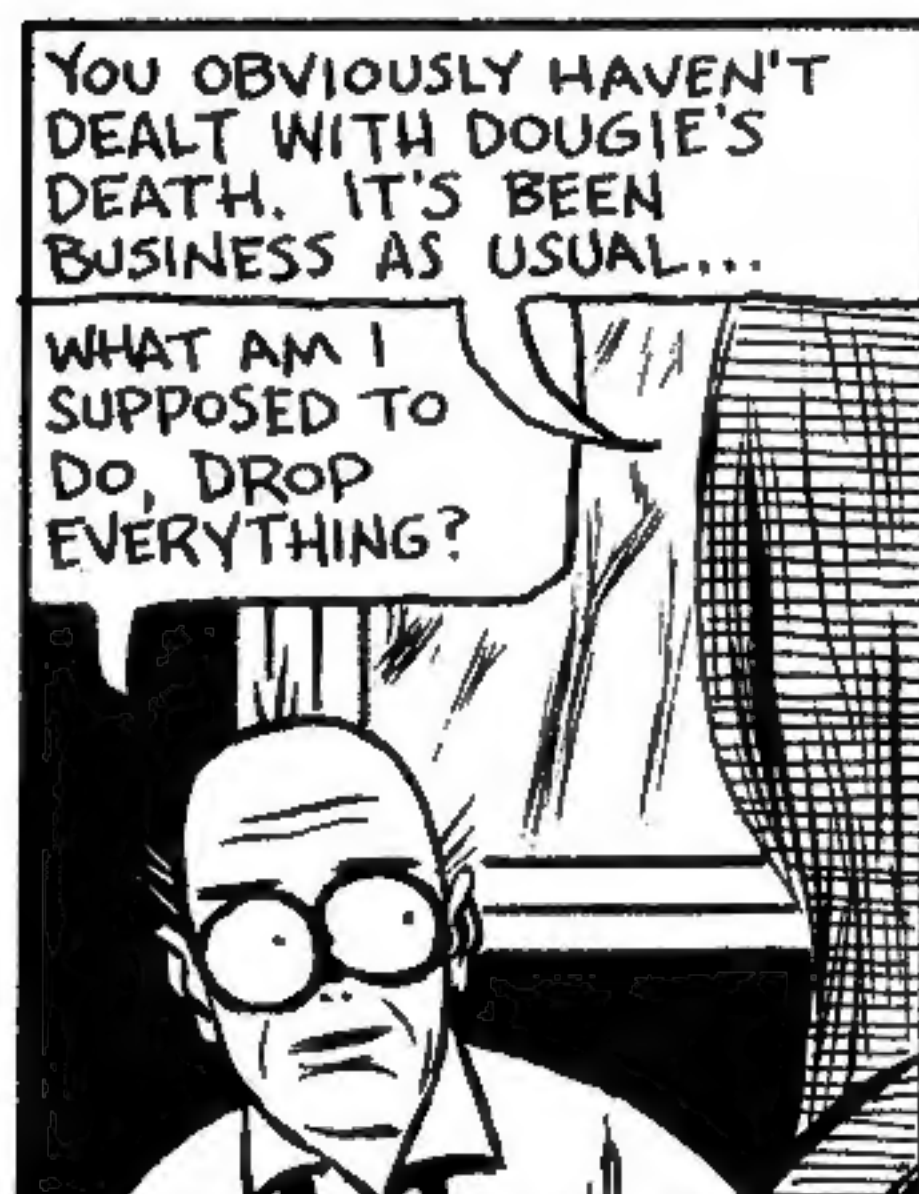
HELL! WHAT ARE FRIENDS FOR?

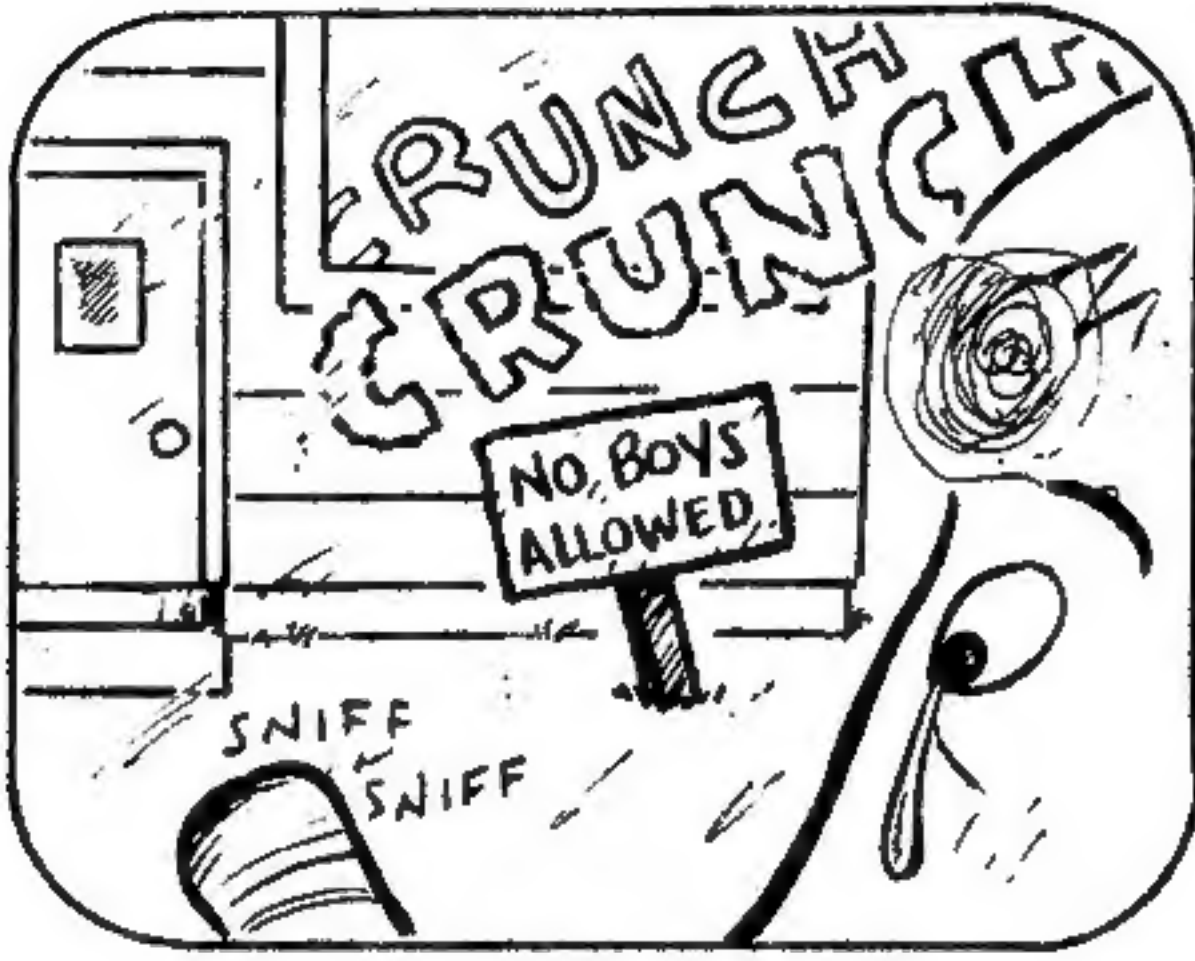


BESIDES, I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT YOU. YOU'RE ONE GUY WHO HAS HIS HEAD ON STRAIGHT.

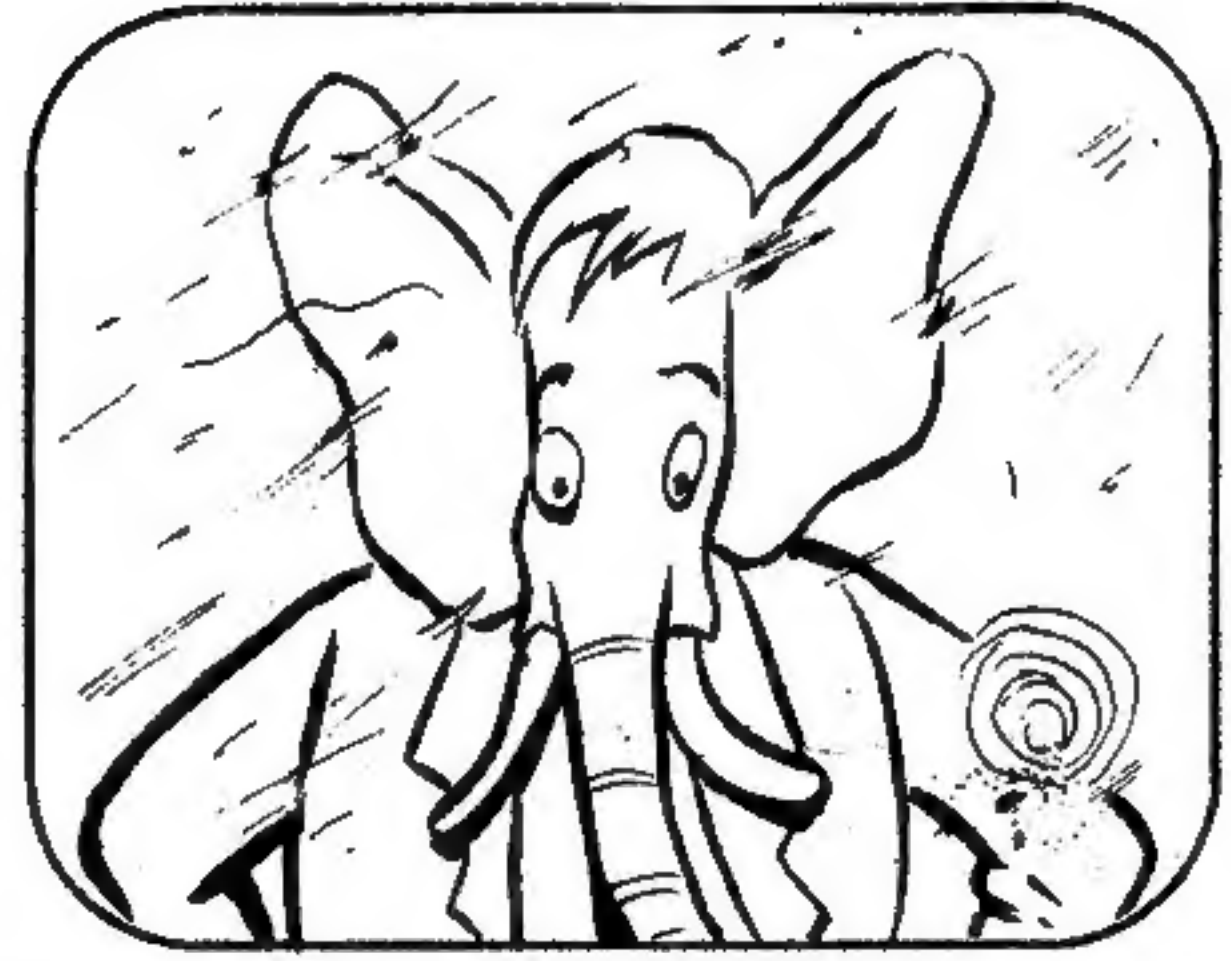




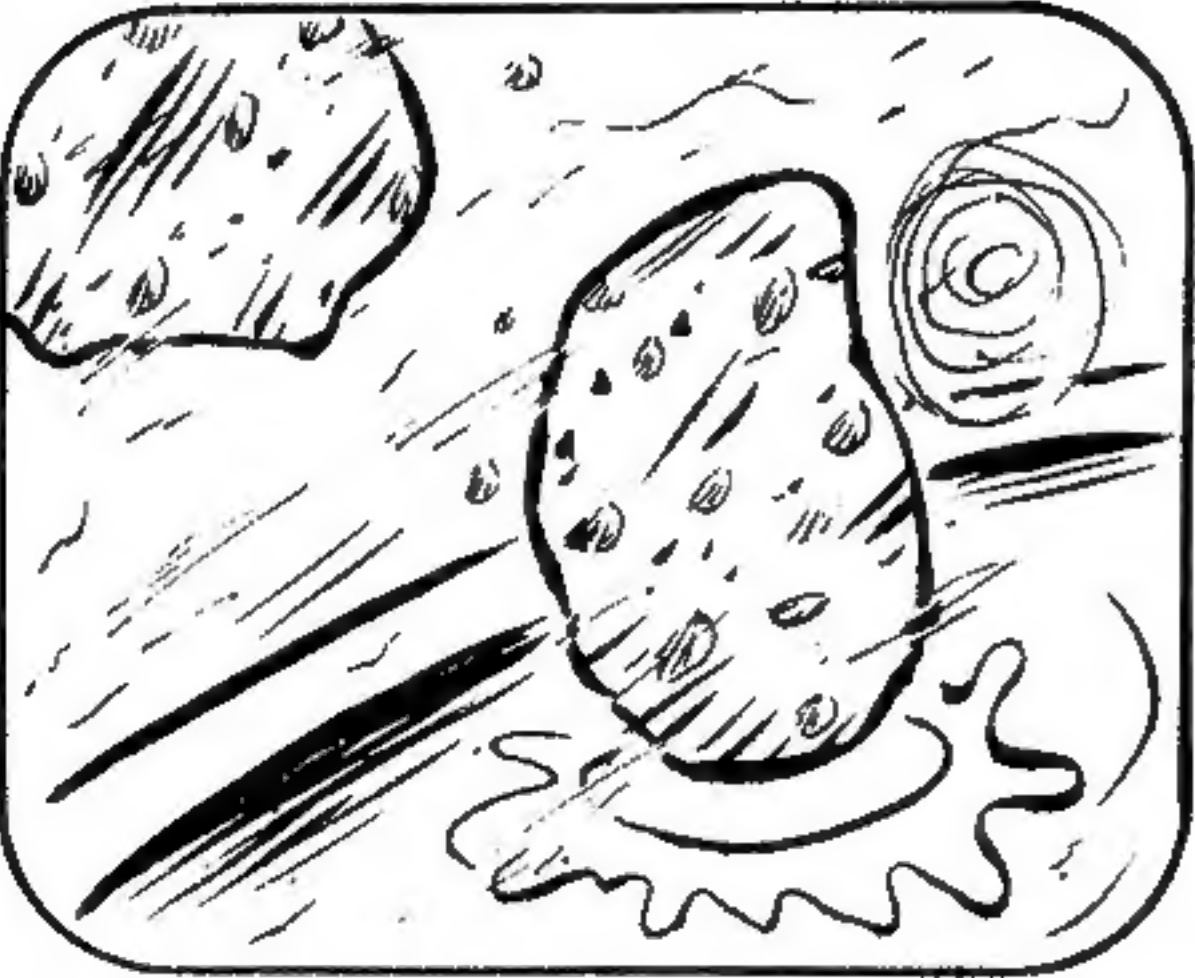




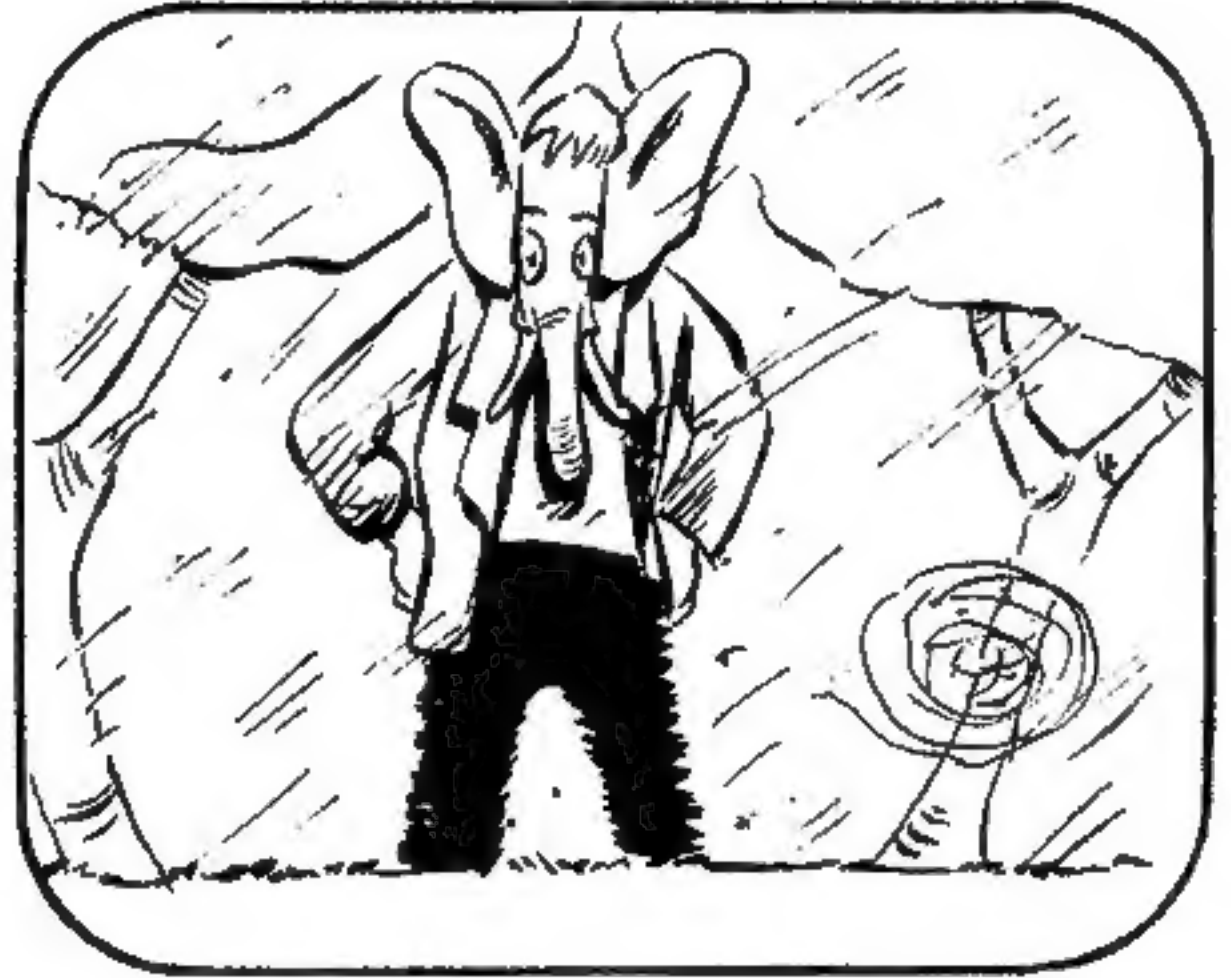
"WHAT'S THE MATTER, SCHMEDLY?"



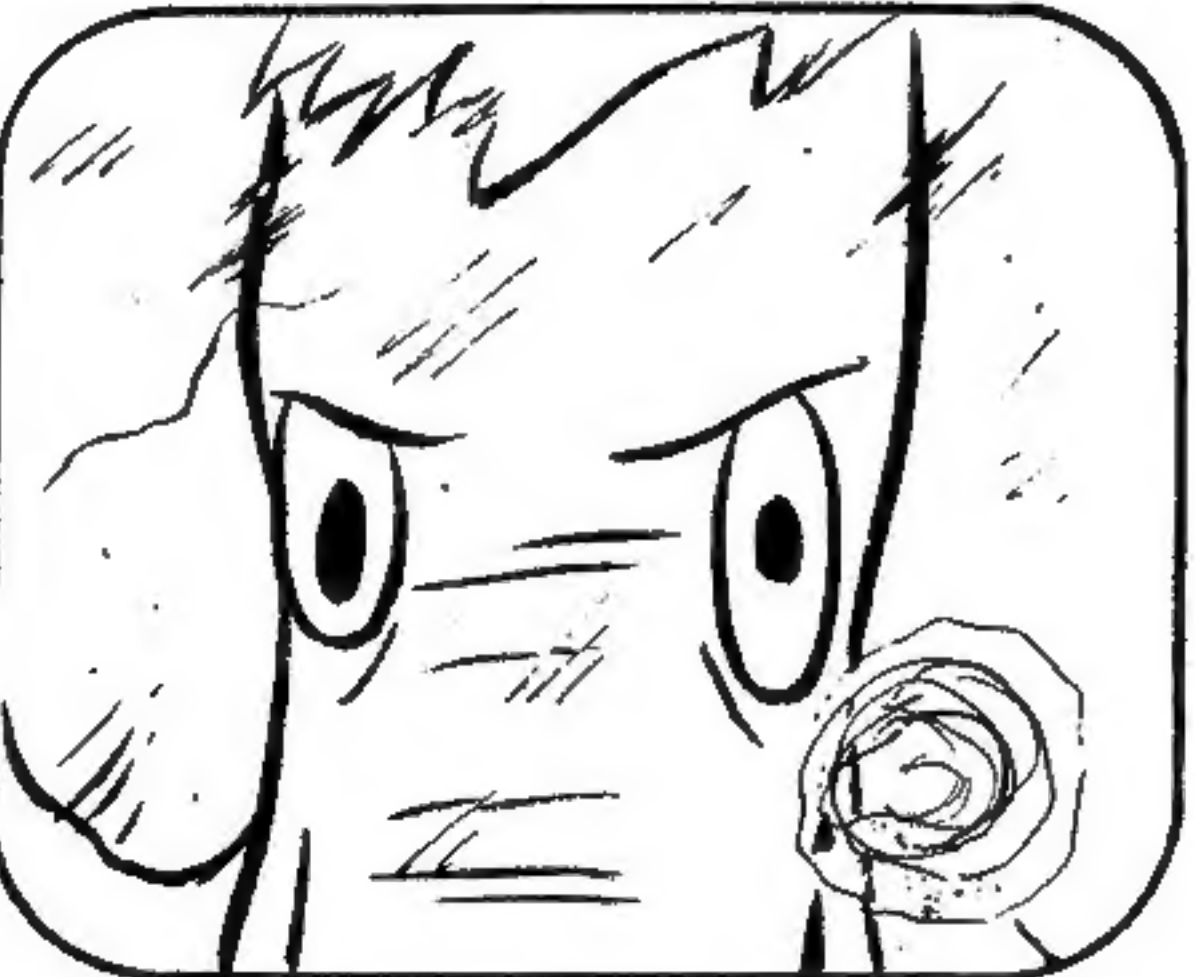
"EVERYONE IS ENJOYING PEANUT BUTTER FLAKES™ - EXCEPT ME!"



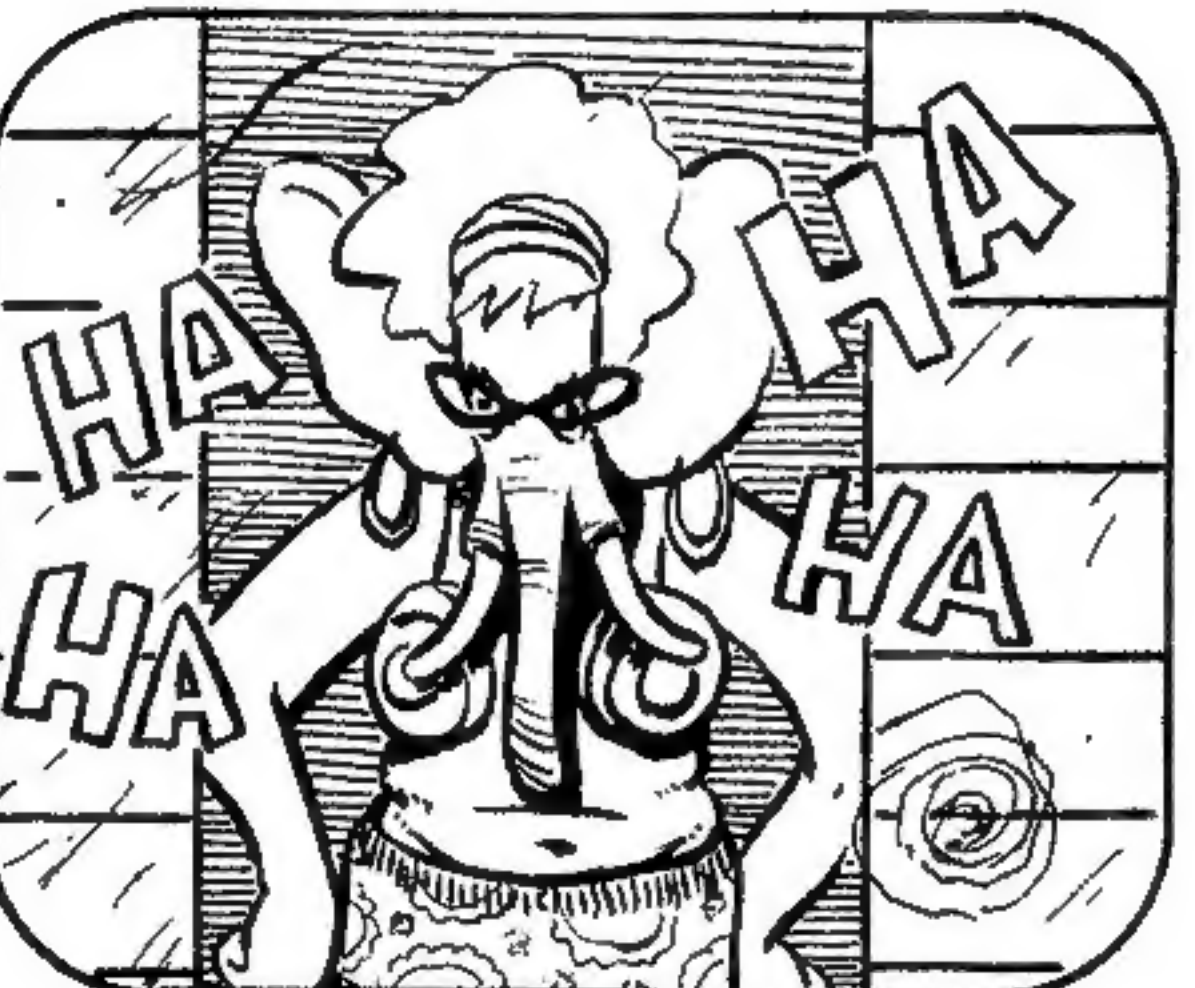
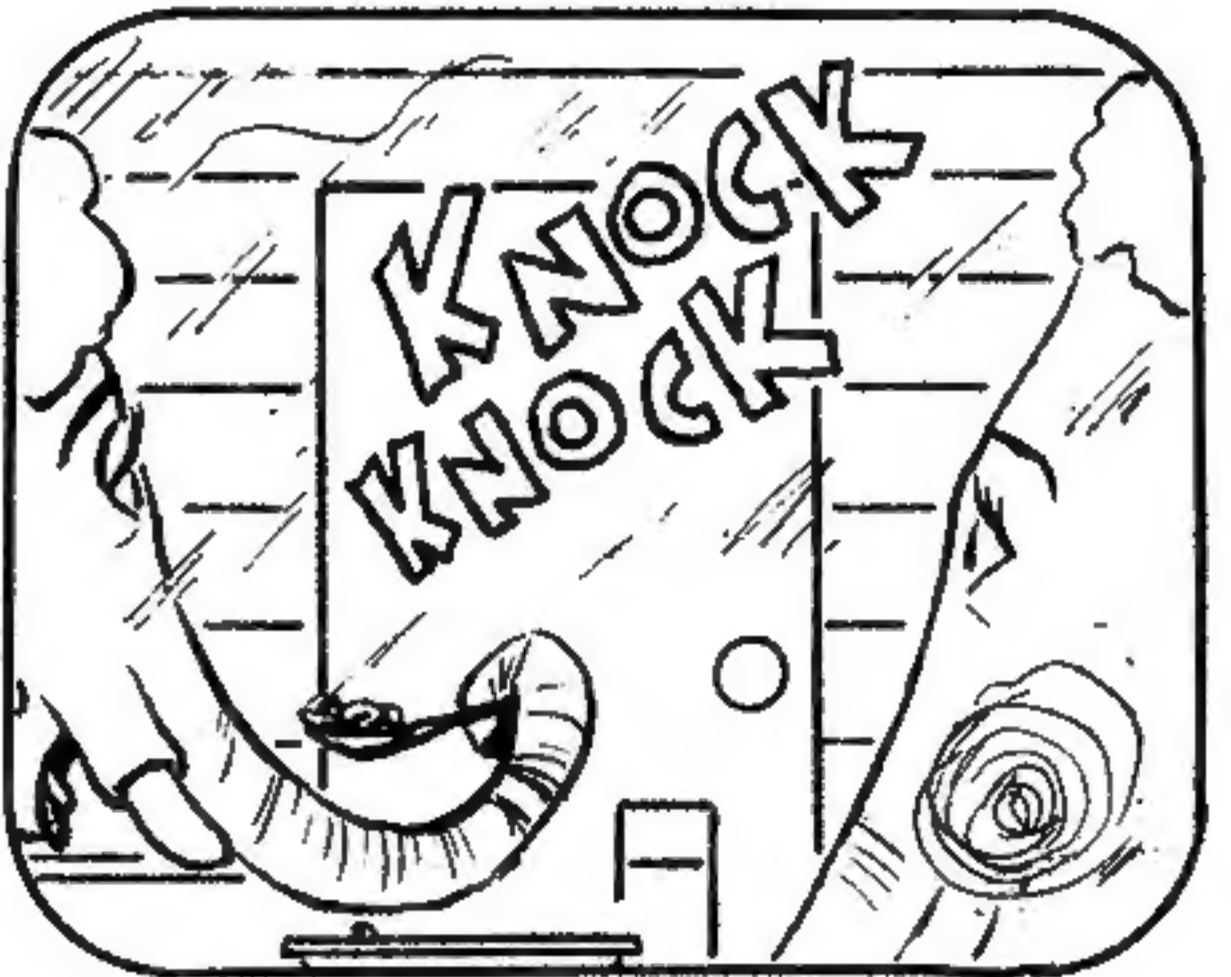
"JUST THINKING ABOUT THOSE CRISPY PEANUT BUTTERY FLAKES..."



"I'D DO ANYTHING FOR A BOWLFUL. ANYTHING?"



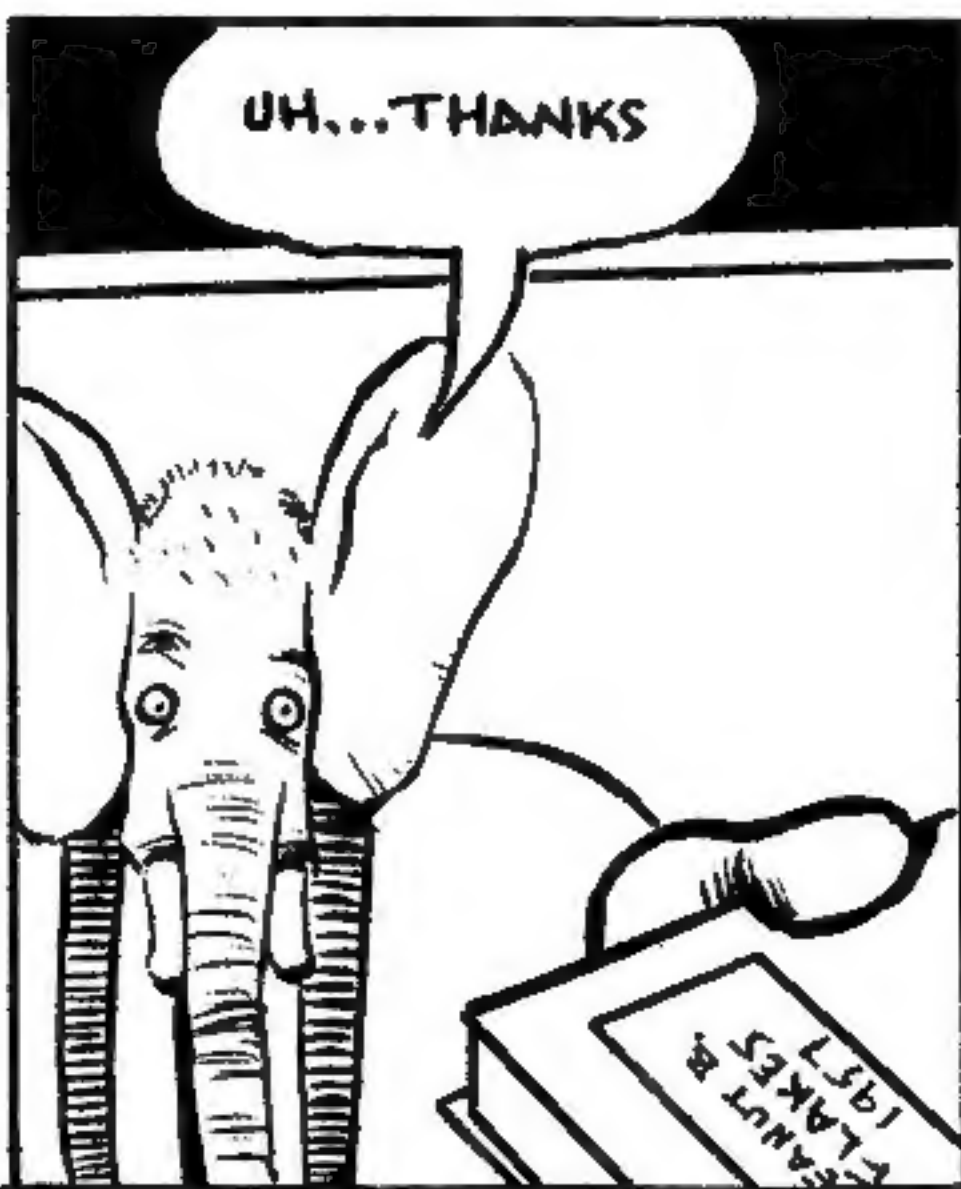
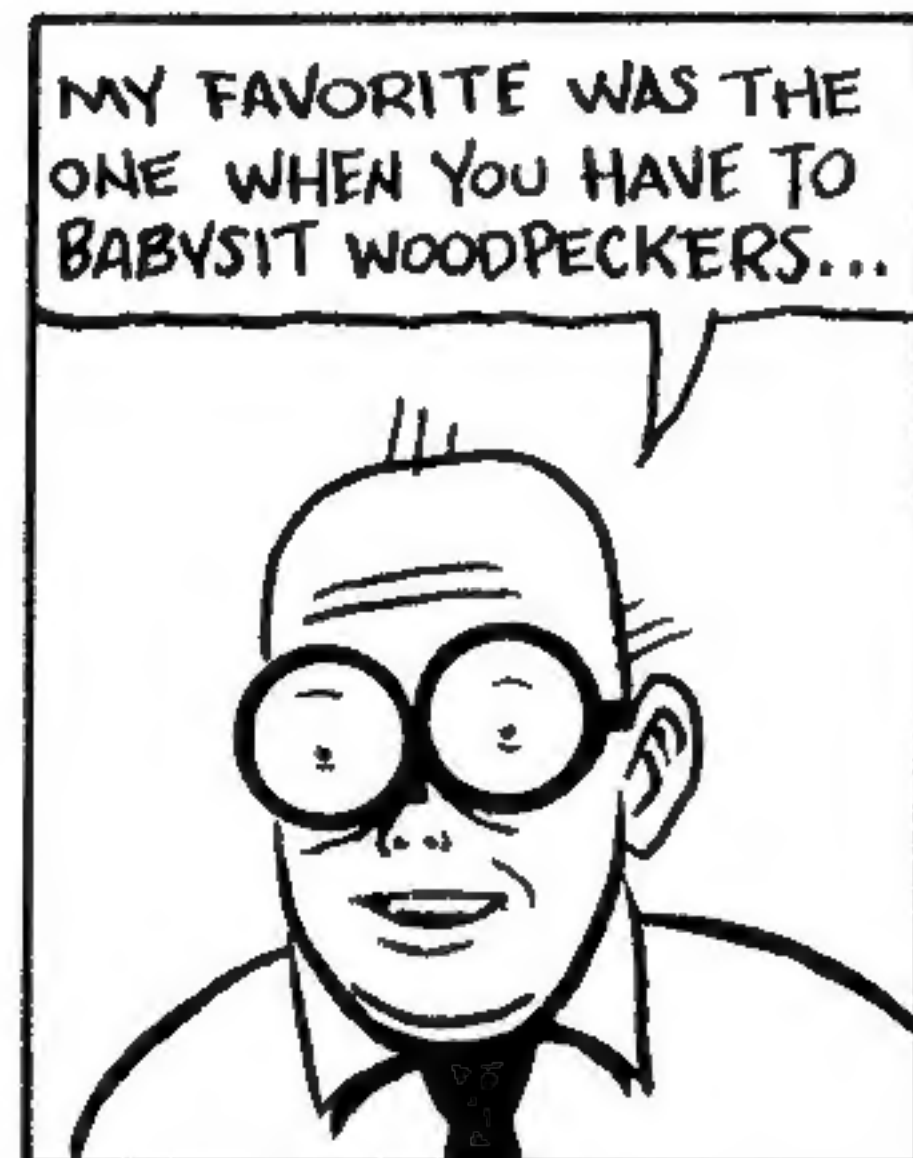
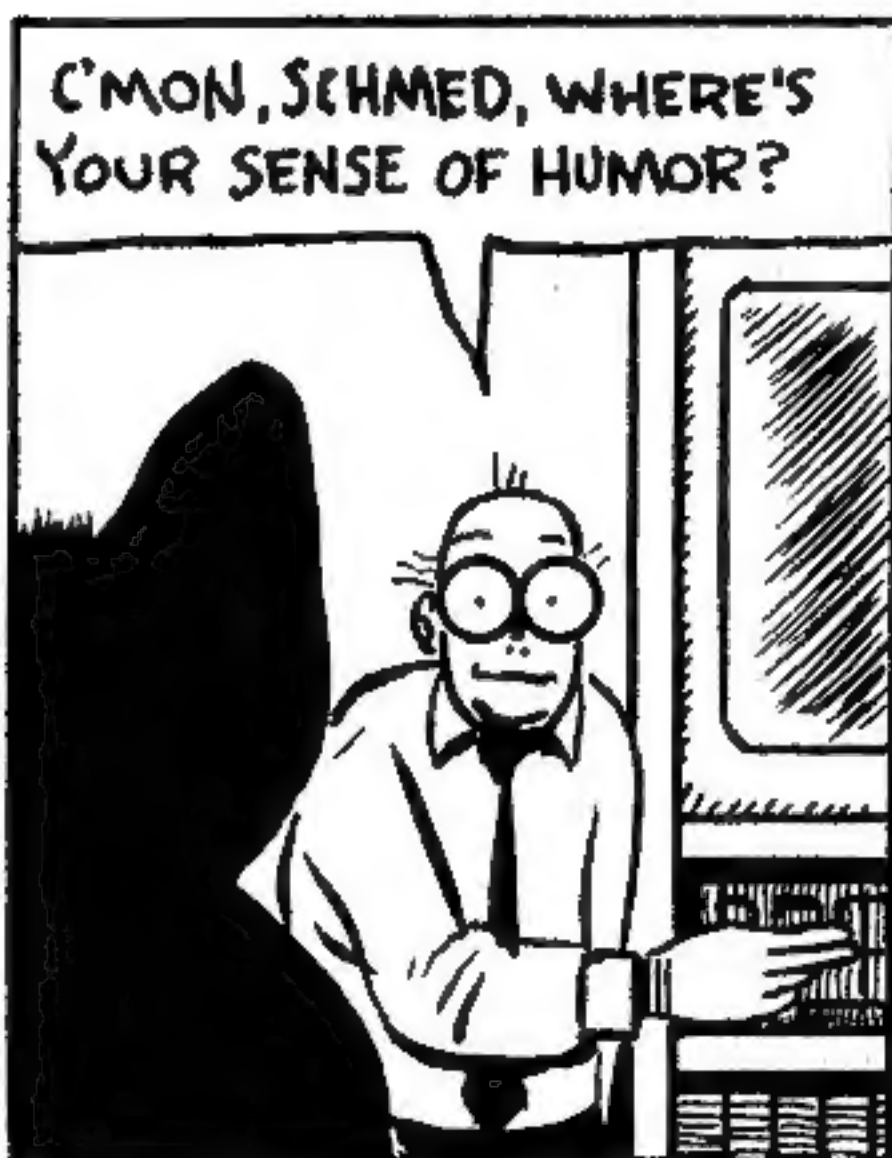
"ANYTHING!"

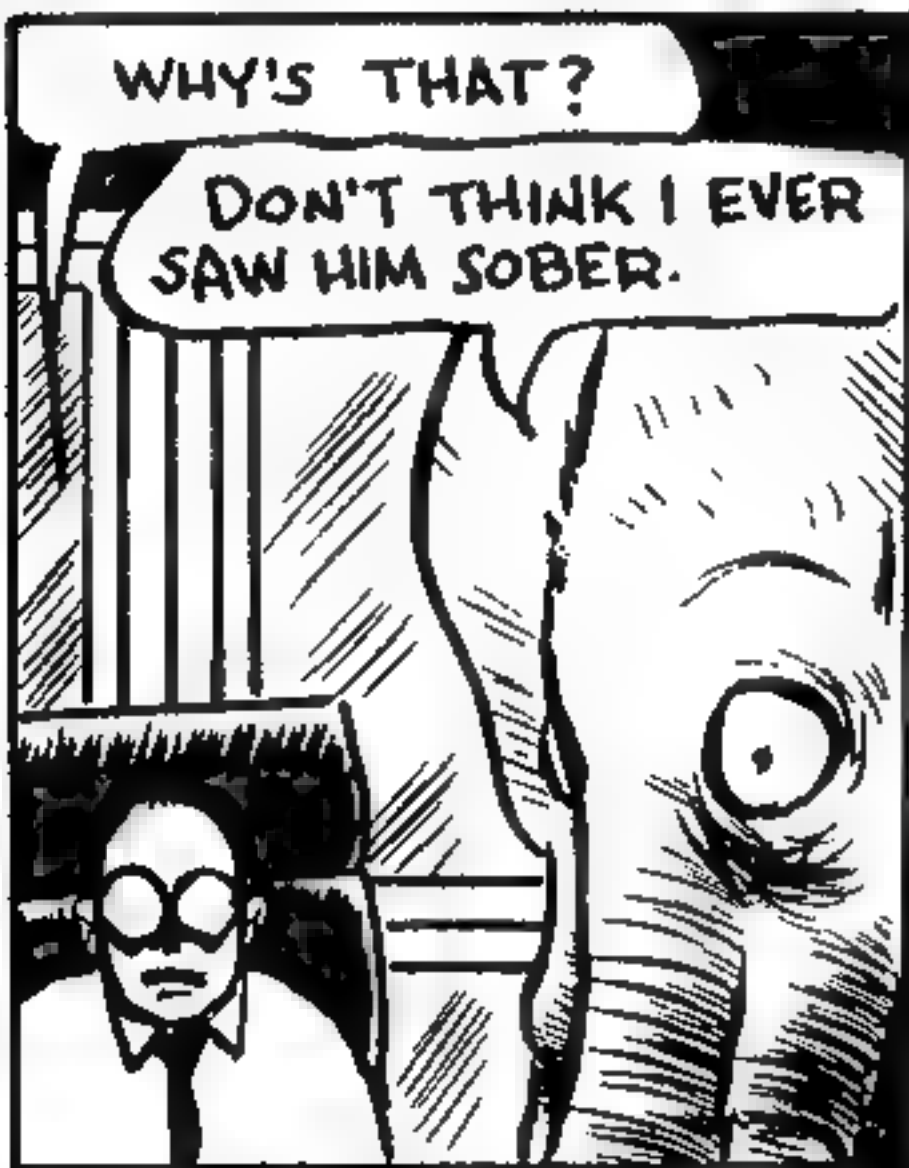
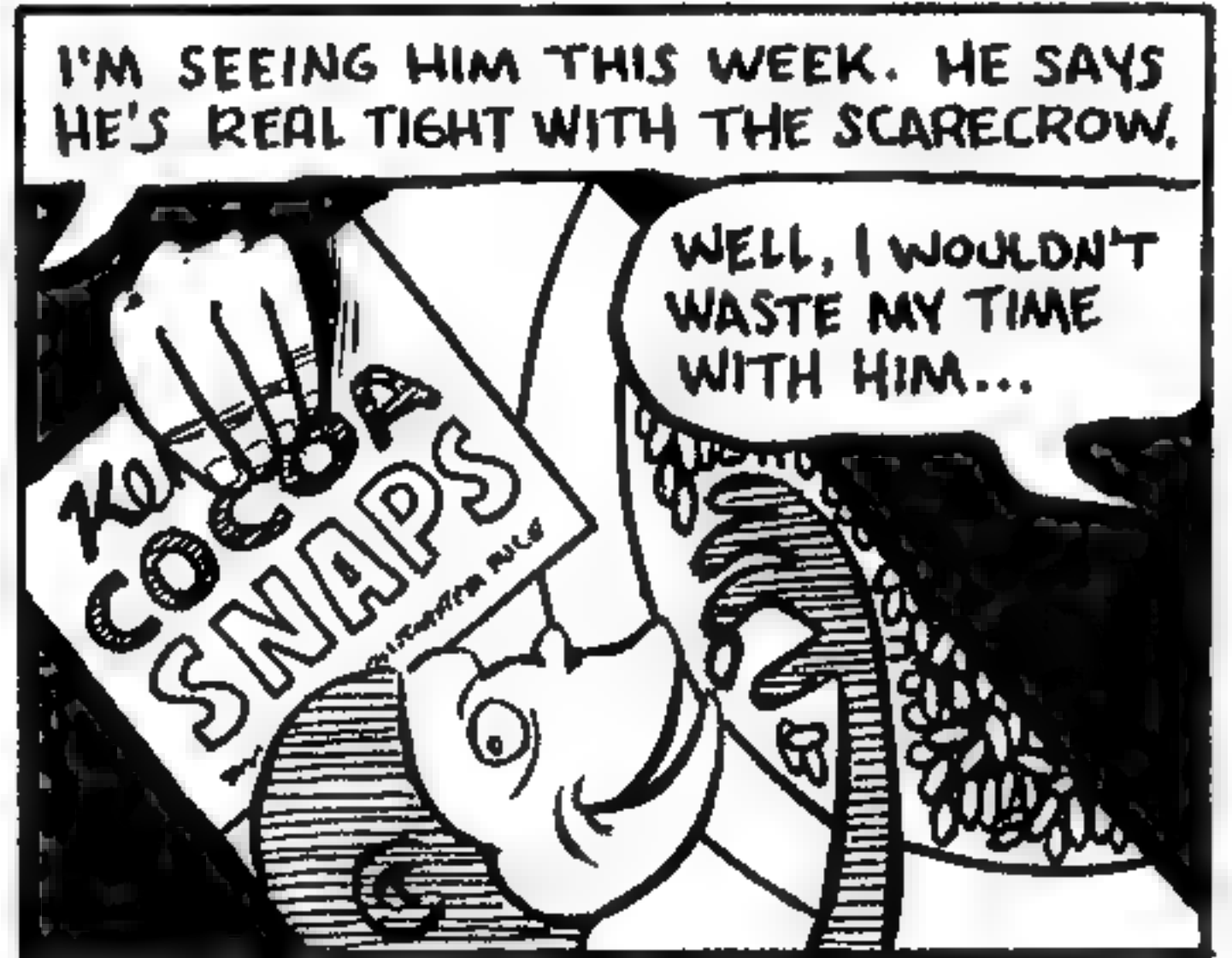
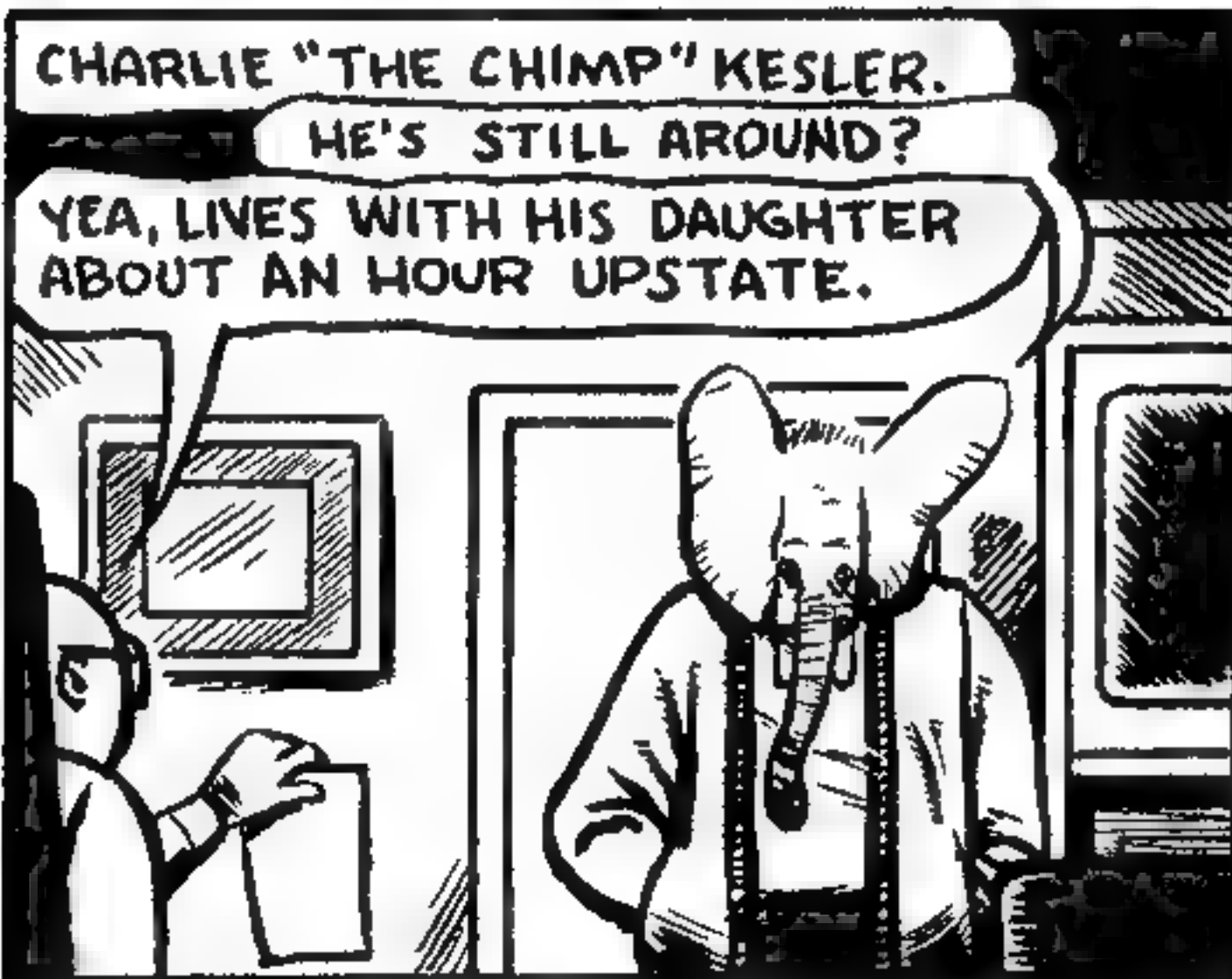
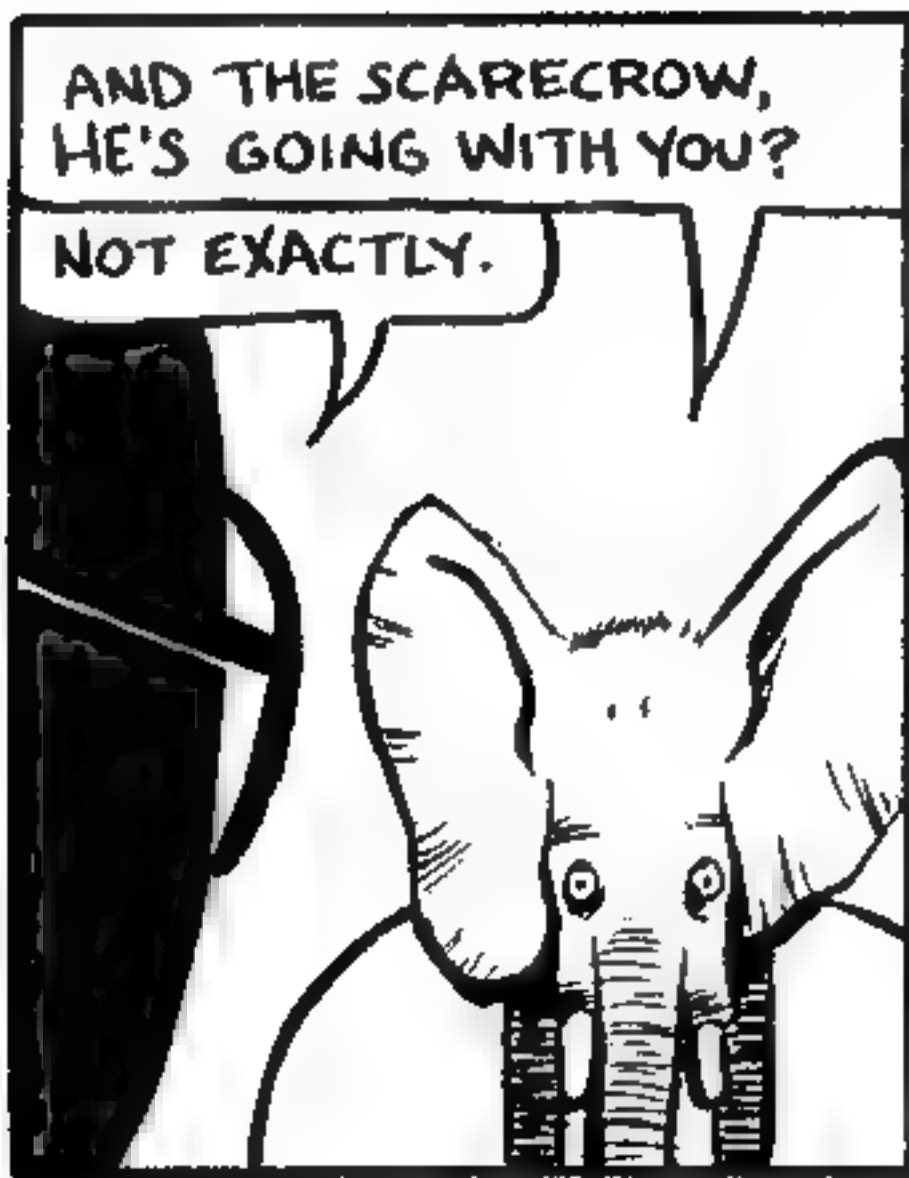


"HI GIRLS, LET'S EAT."



PEANUT BUTTER FLAKES™, THE TASTE YOU'LL DO ANYTHING FOR!



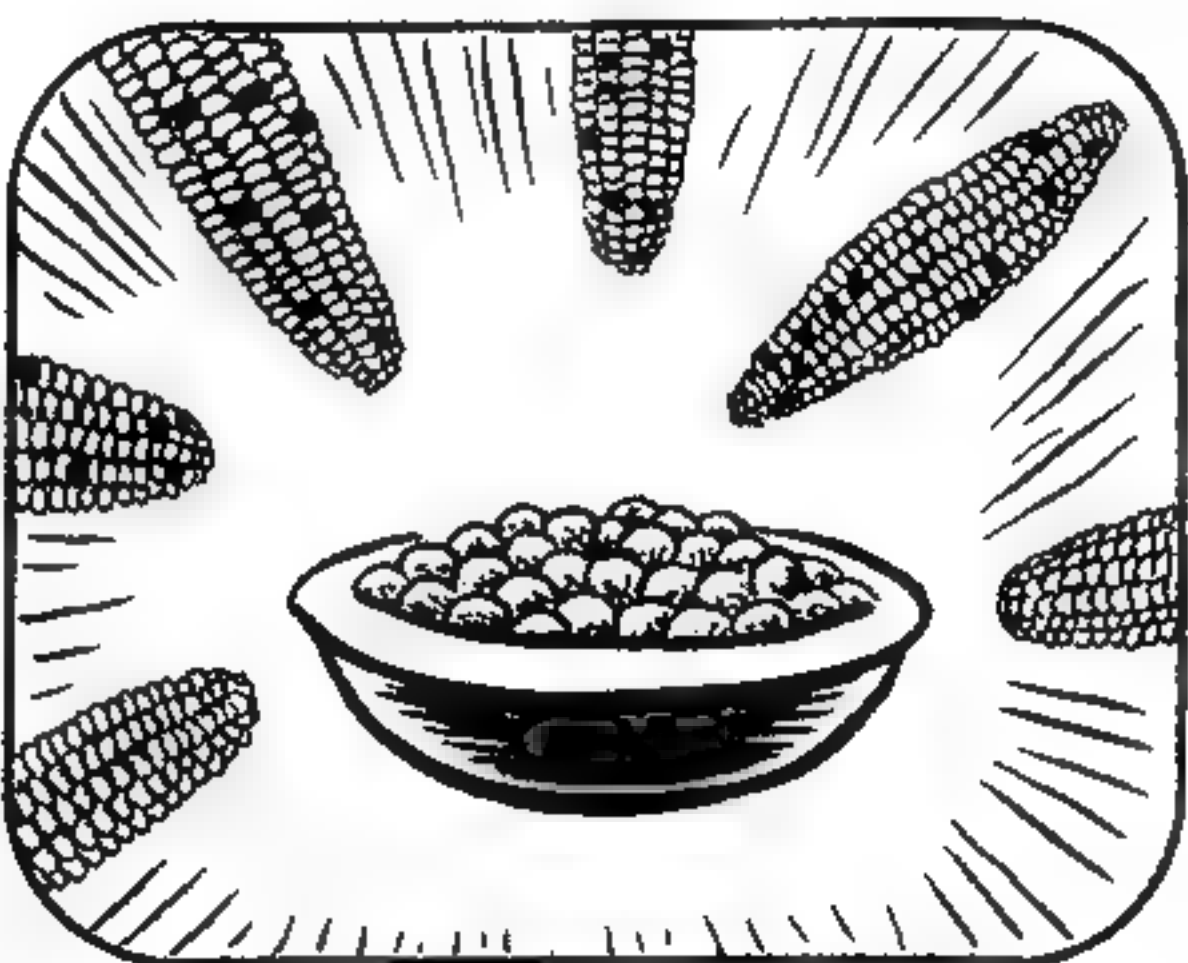




SHOO! SHOO!



I NEED PLENTY OF CORN
FOR MY CEREAL.



IT'S JUST CORN
AND NOTHING ELSE!



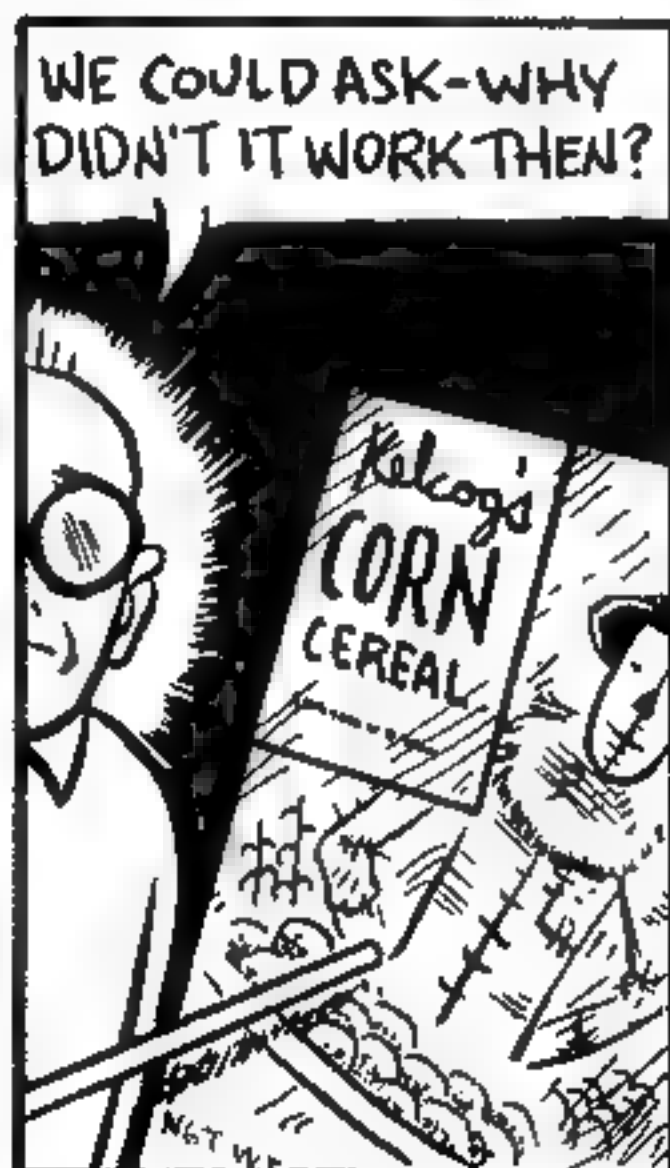
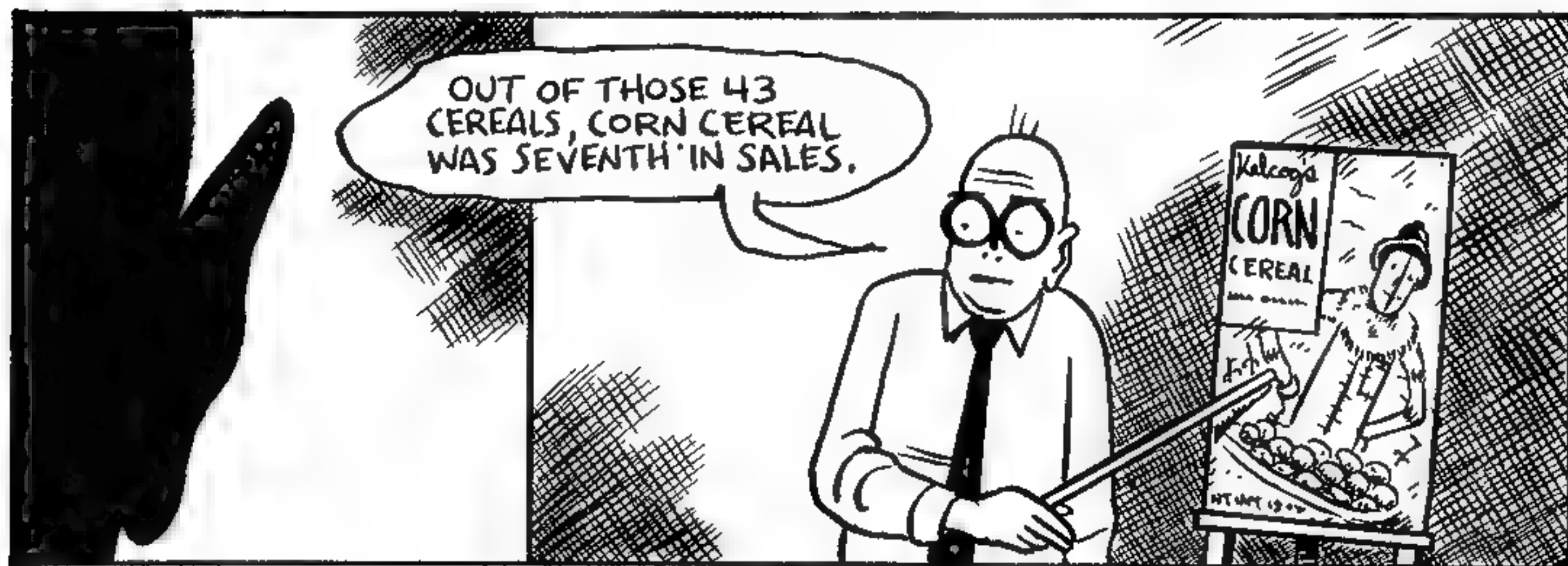
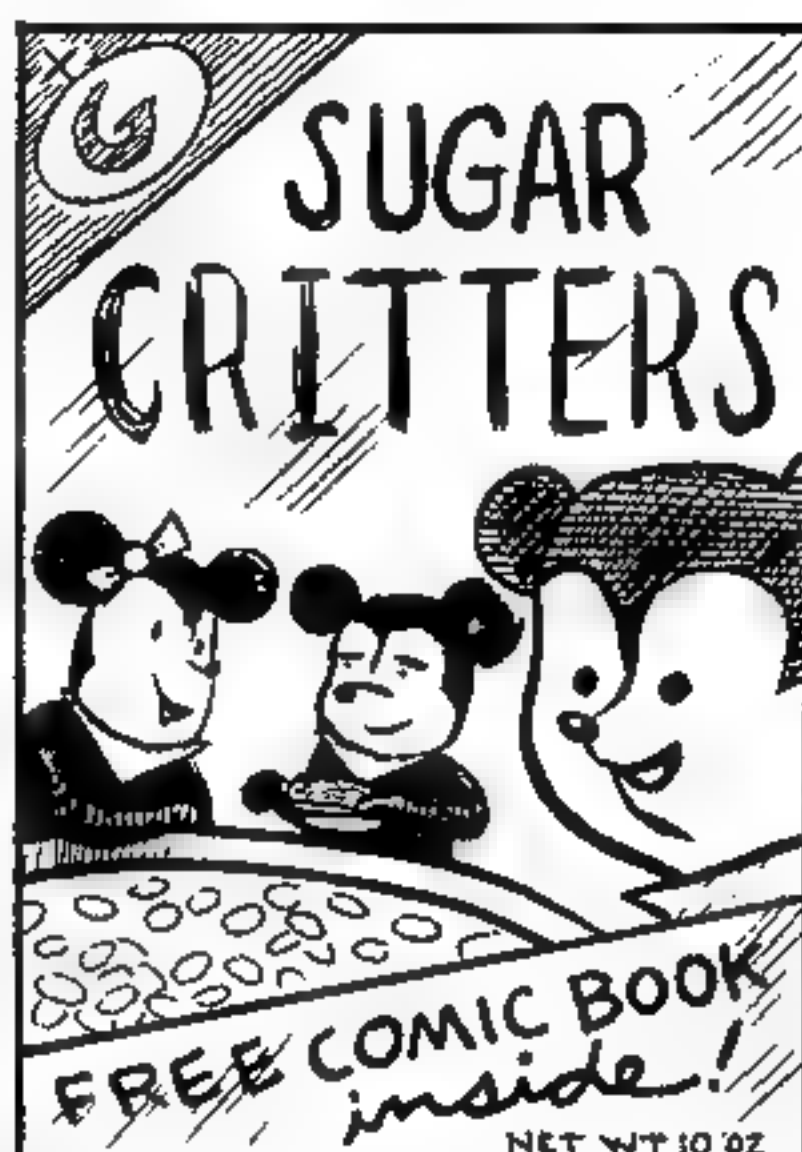
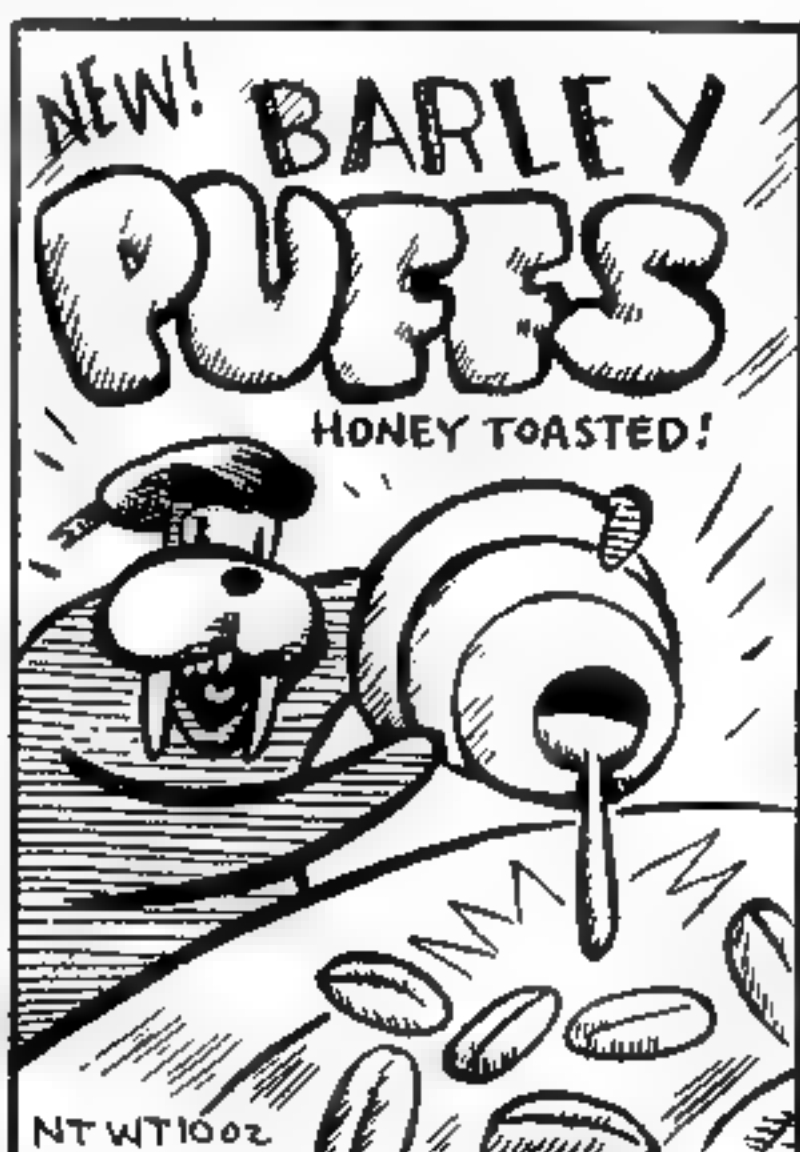
IT'S PART OF A NUTRITIOUS
BREAKFAST.



THIS COMMERCIAL
WAS MADE IN THE
EARLY '50S

AND I'LL STAND BY
EVERY BITE!

"NOW IF YOU TURN TO PAGE SEVEN IN YOUR REPORT, YOU'LL SEE THAT FORTY-THREE CEREALS WERE LAUNCHED THAT YEAR..."



YES, I DO REMEMBER THAT NIGHT.



AND WILL YOU PLEASE TAKE OFF YOUR HAT. THIS IS NOT A BARN.



YES, SIR.

NOW ACCORDING TO THE REPORT, SCHMEDLY AND YOURSELF WORKED ALL NIGHT DOING INVENTORY.



YES, SIR, THAT IS CORRECT...

NOW ISN'T IT ODD THAT A PERSON OF YOUR STATUS WOULD DO STOCK ROOM WORK UNTIL 4:00 AM?



NO, SIR.

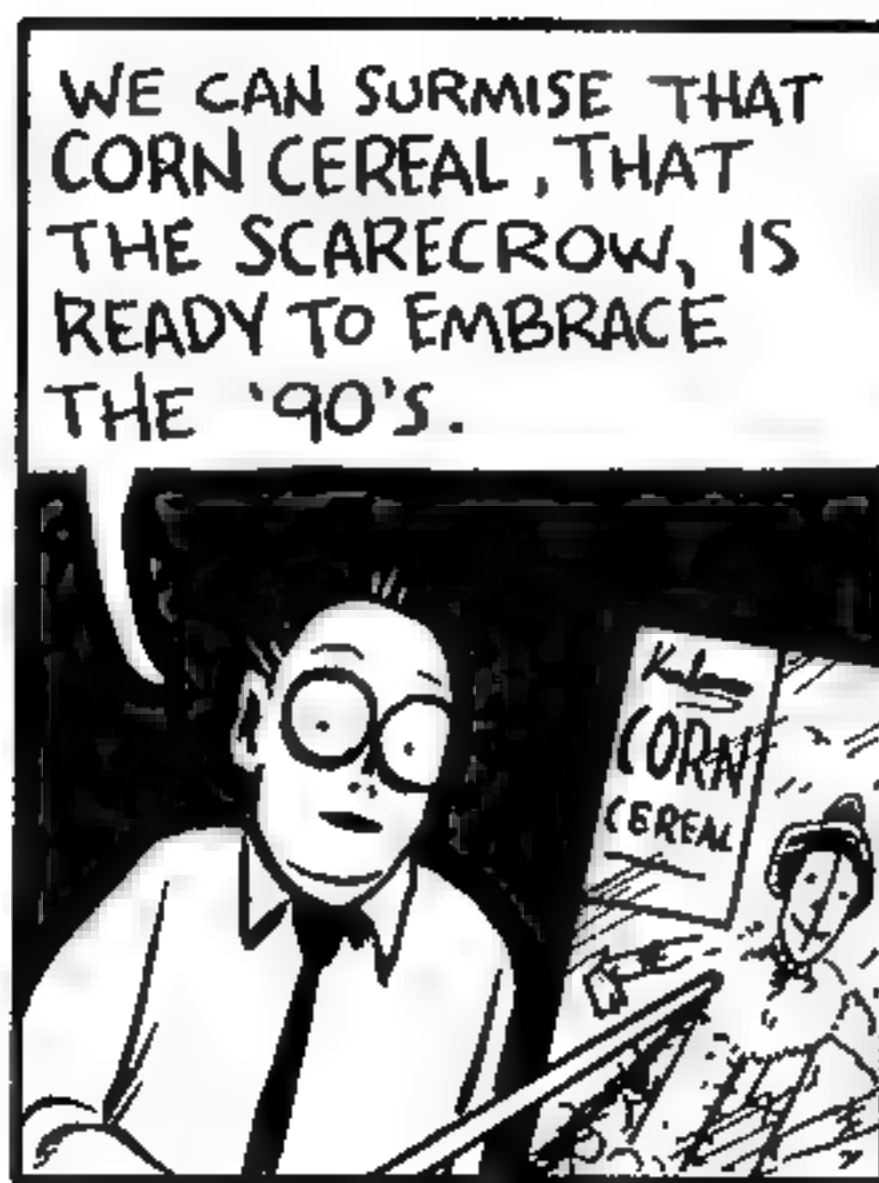
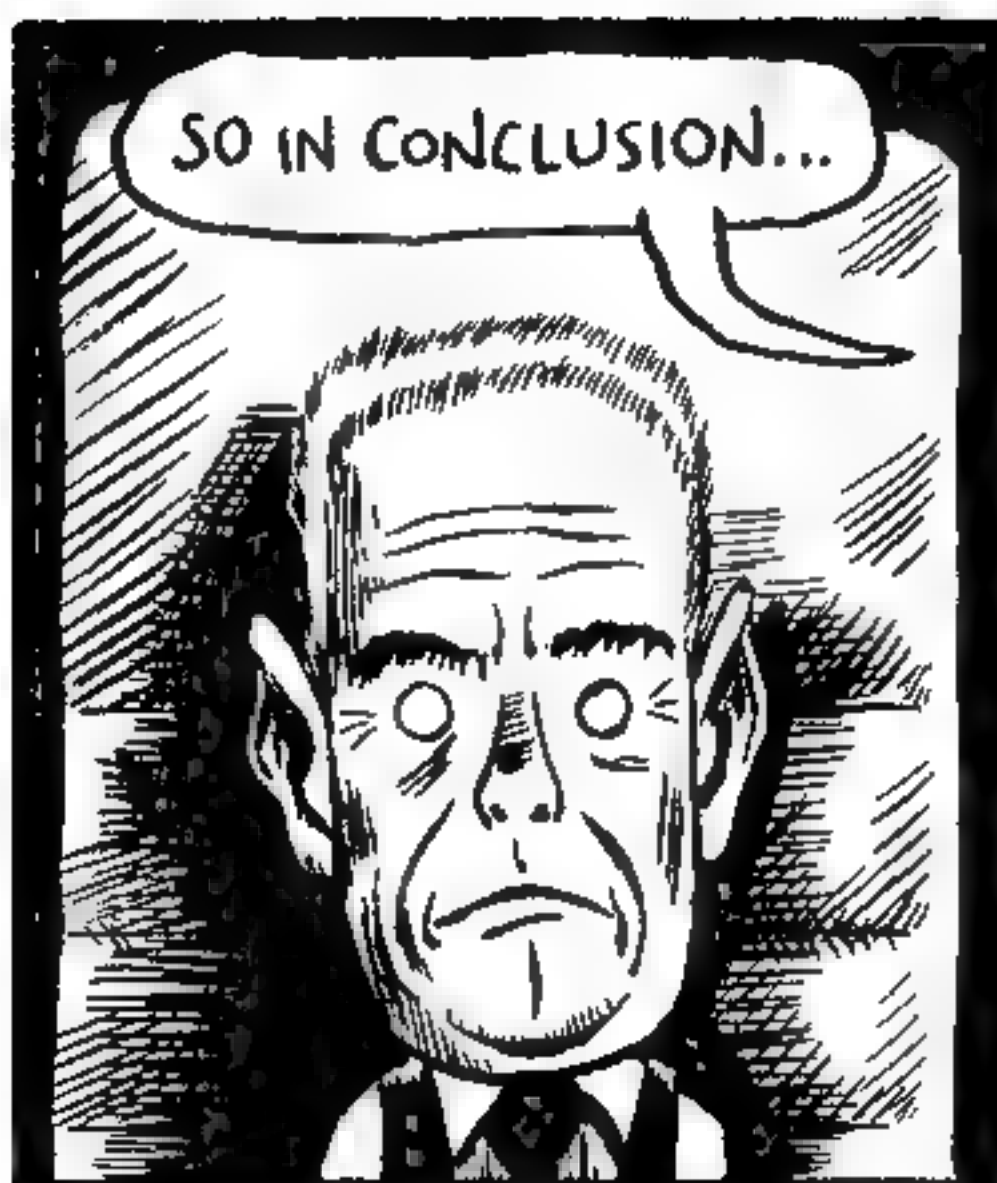
SCHMEDLY SAYS THAT YOU INSISTED ON STAYING BEHIND - REFUSING TO LEAVE WITH HIM.

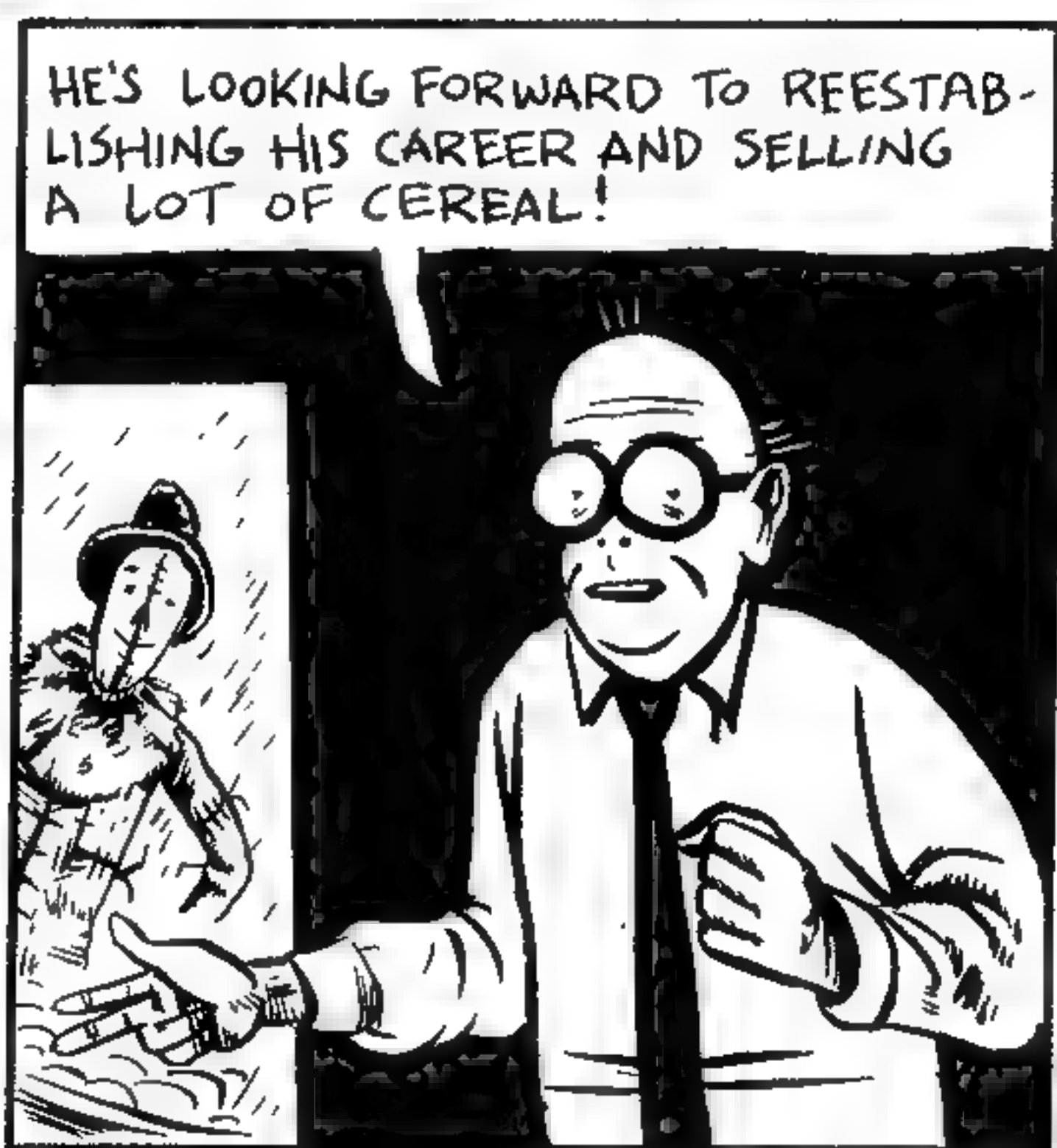
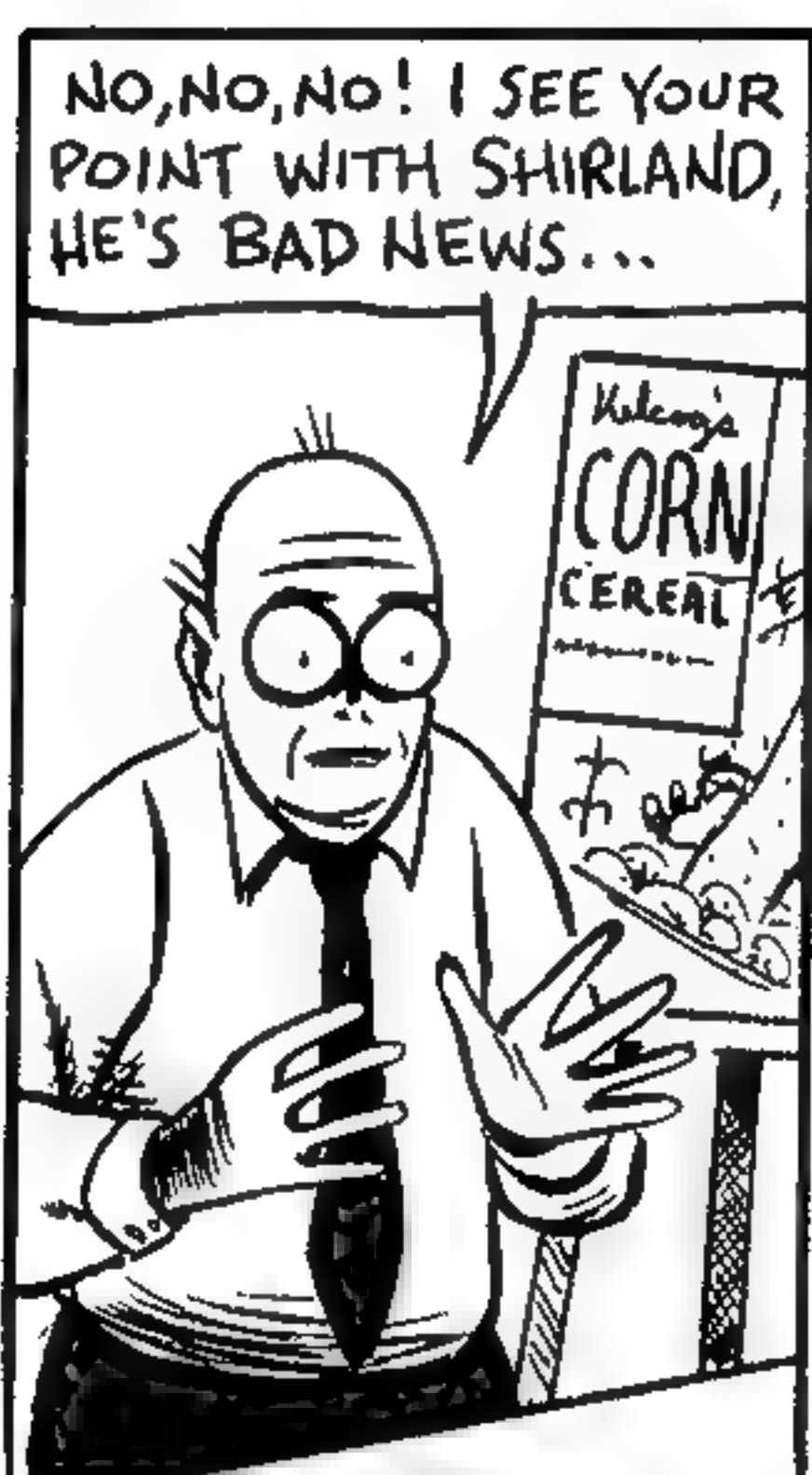
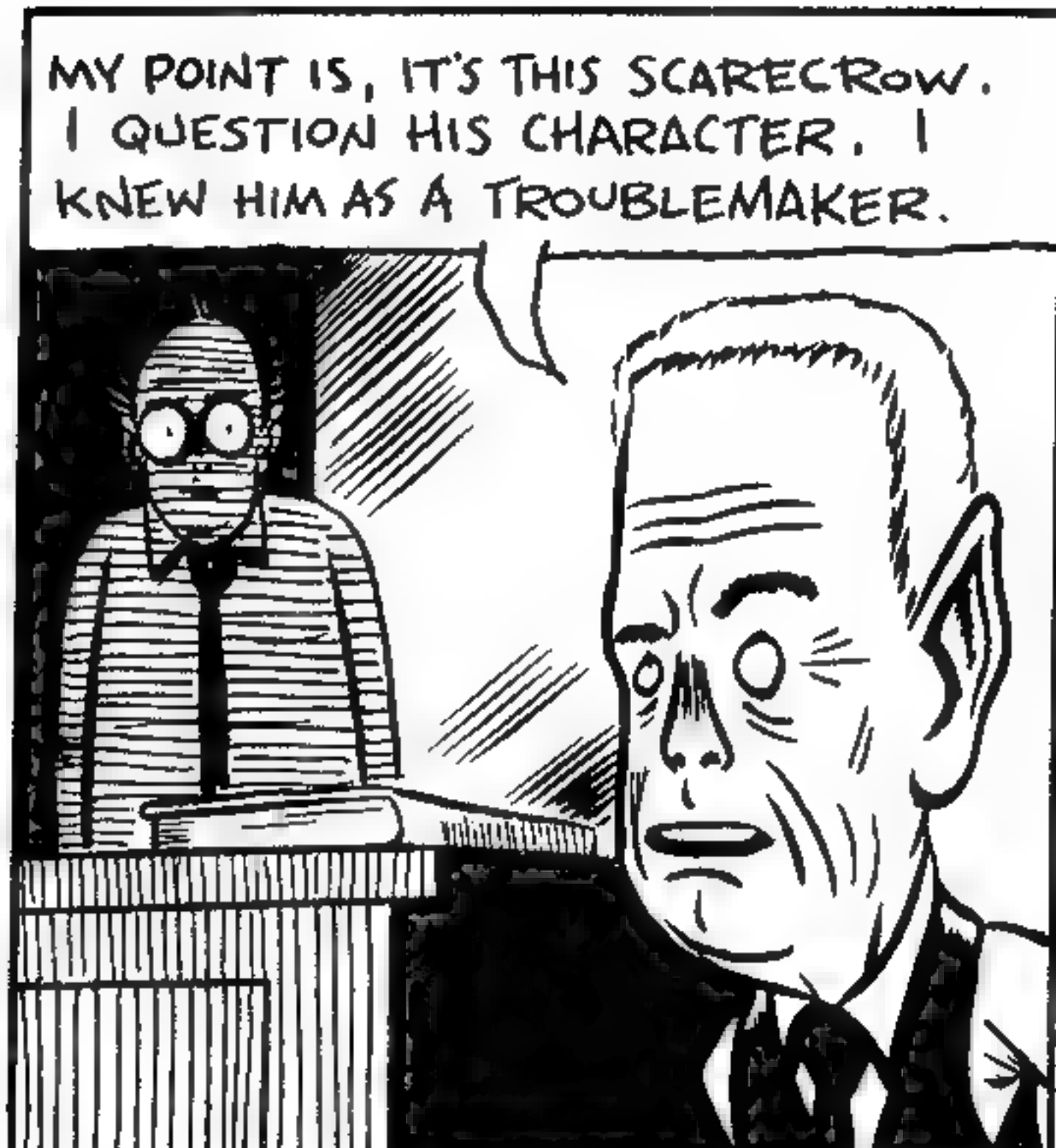


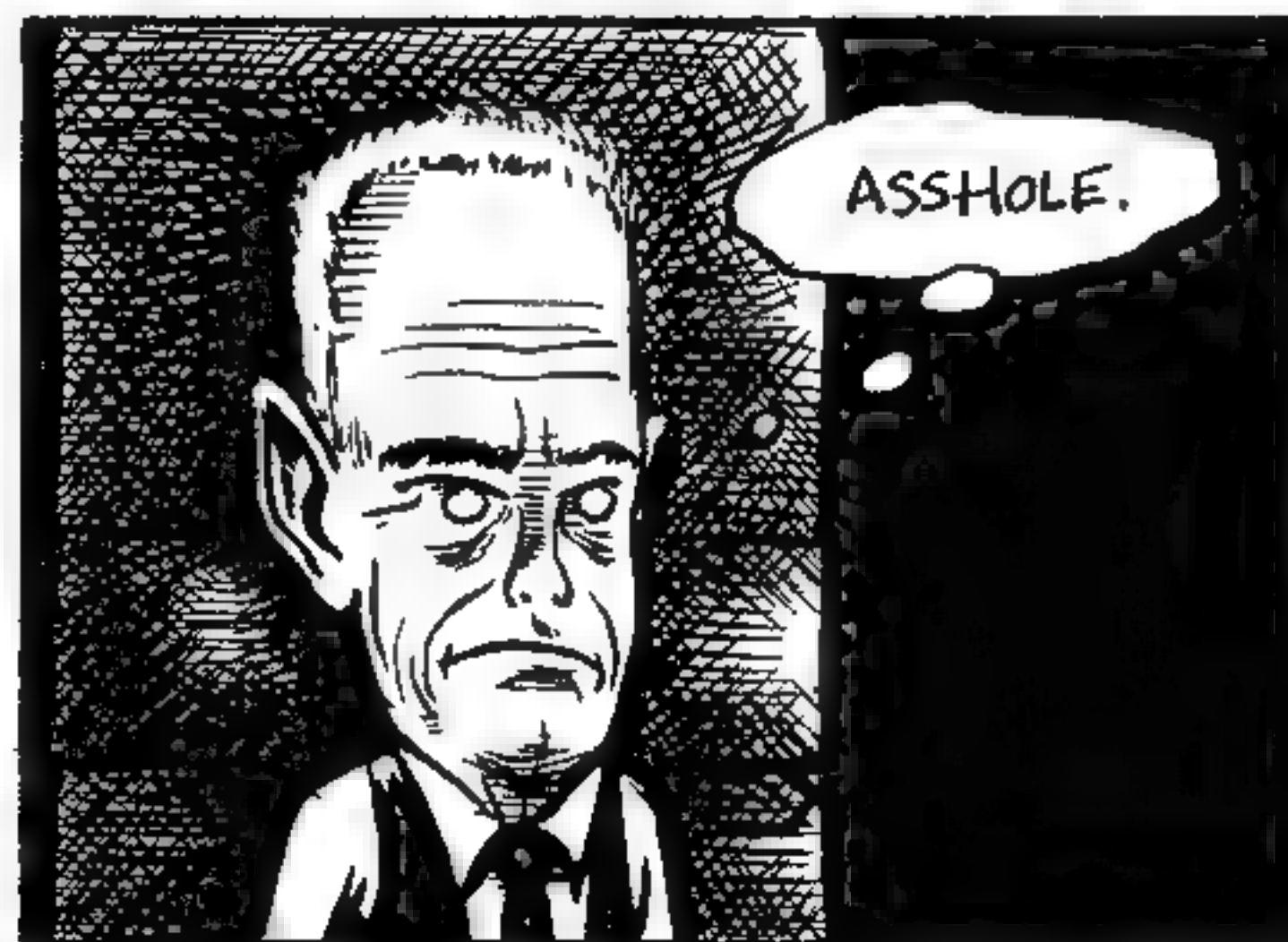
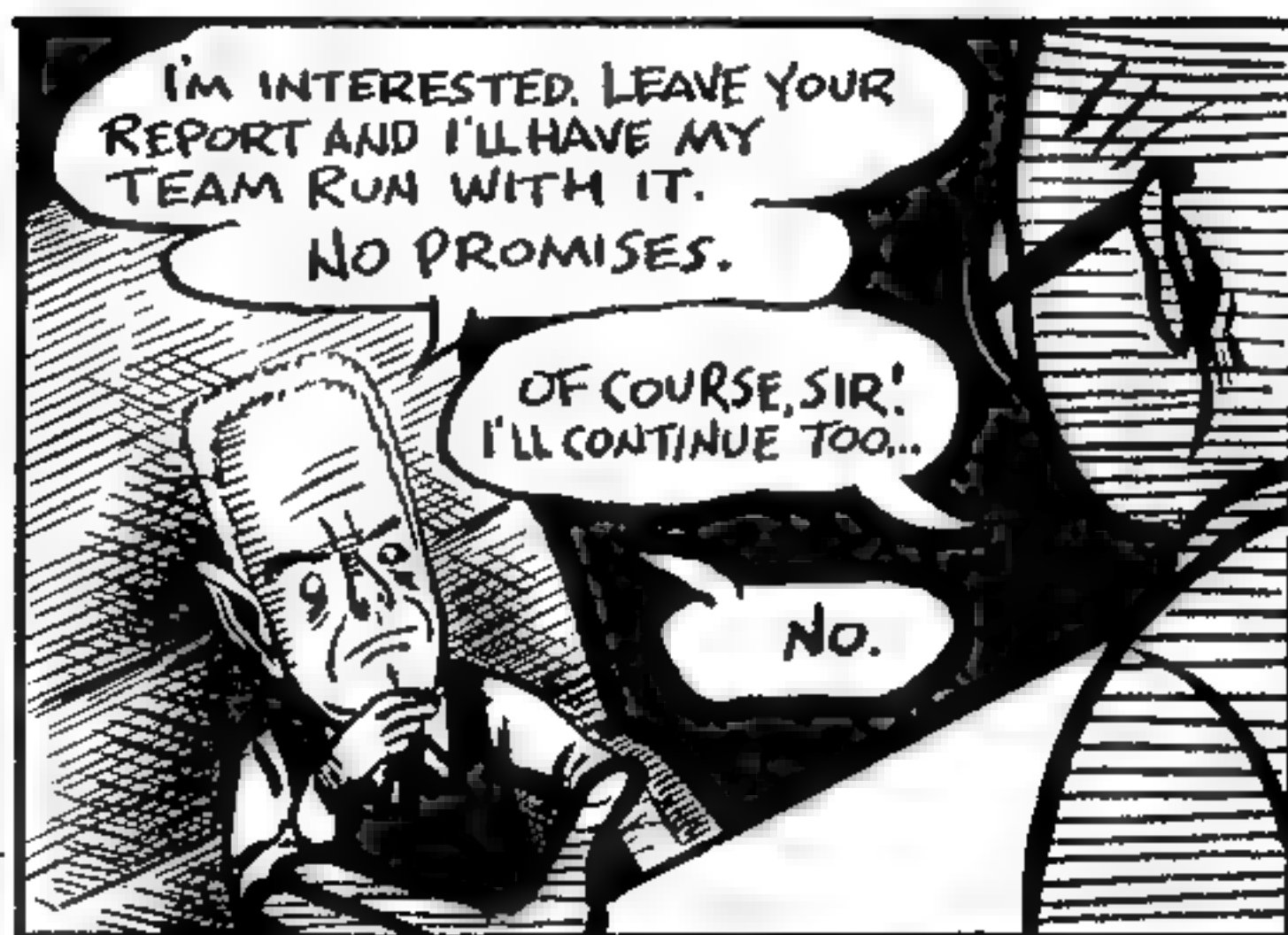
WELL?

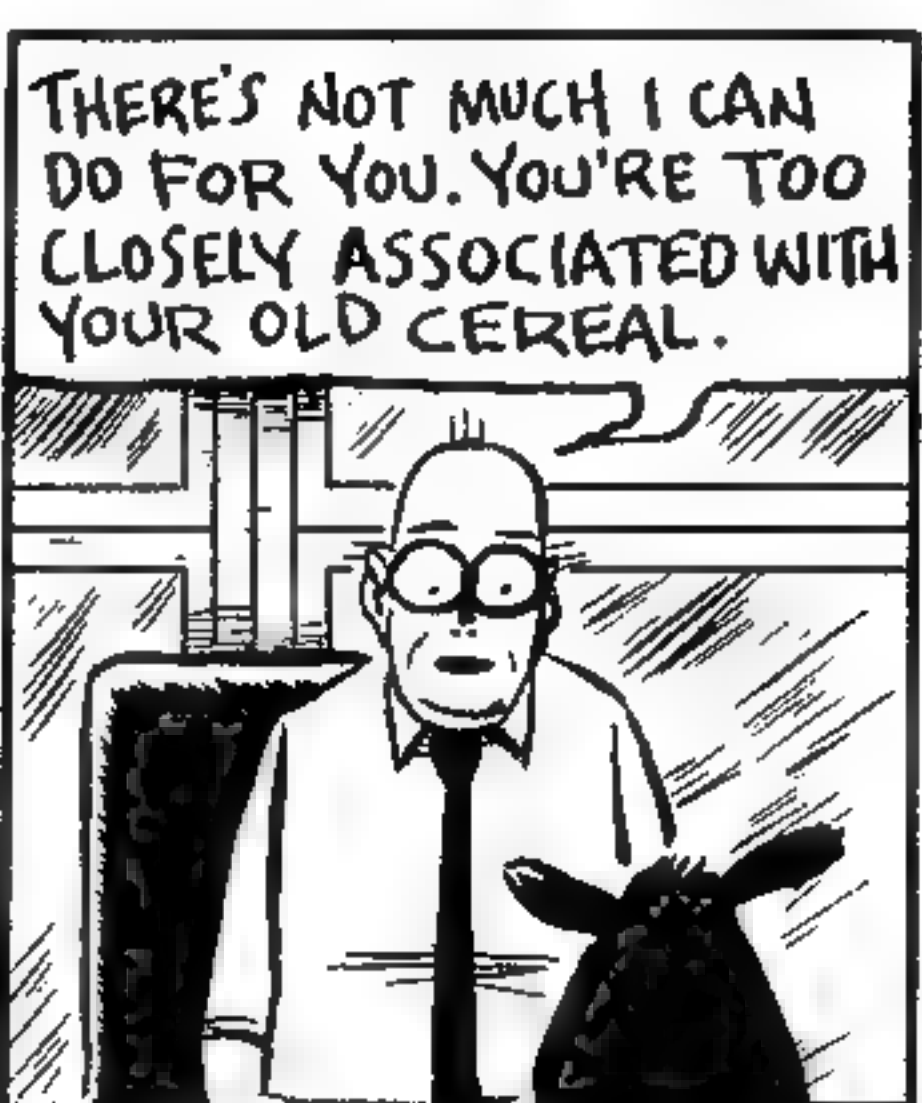
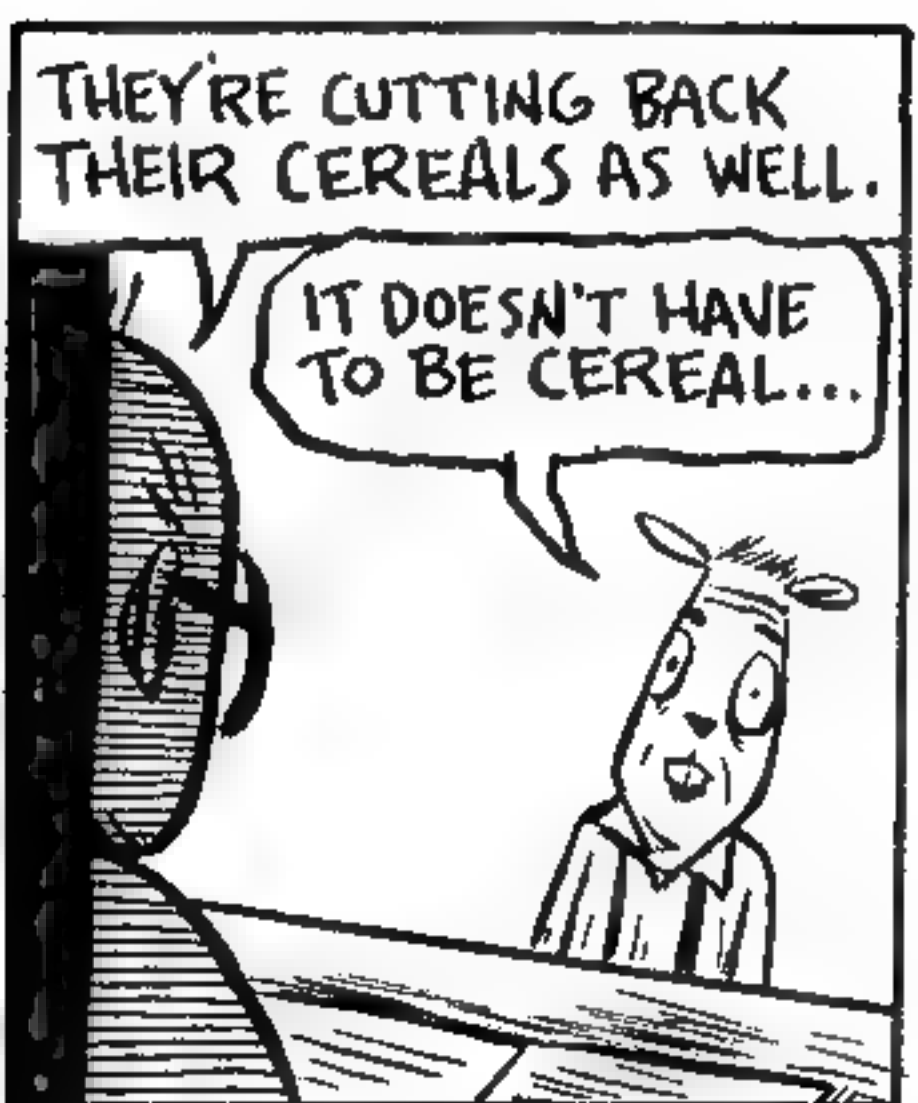
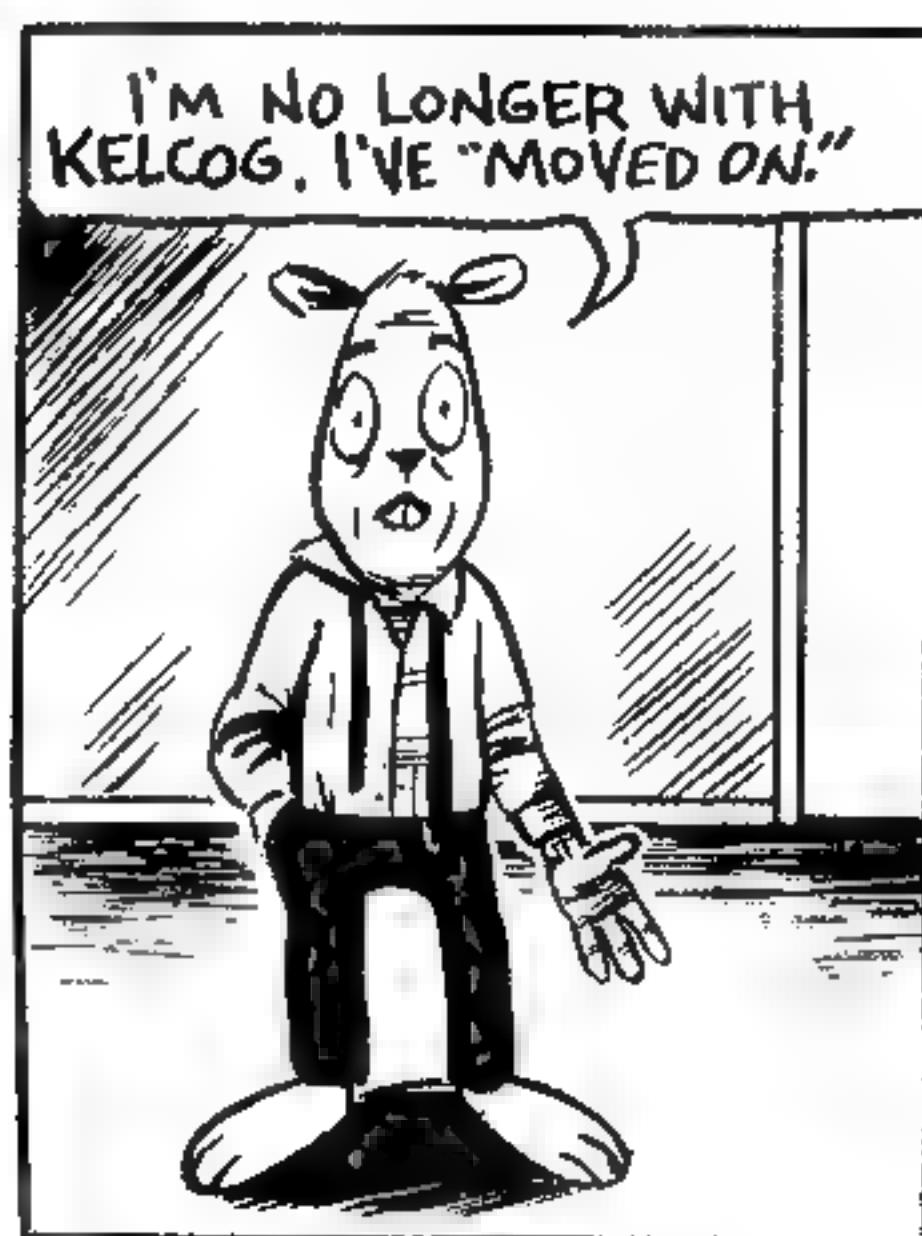


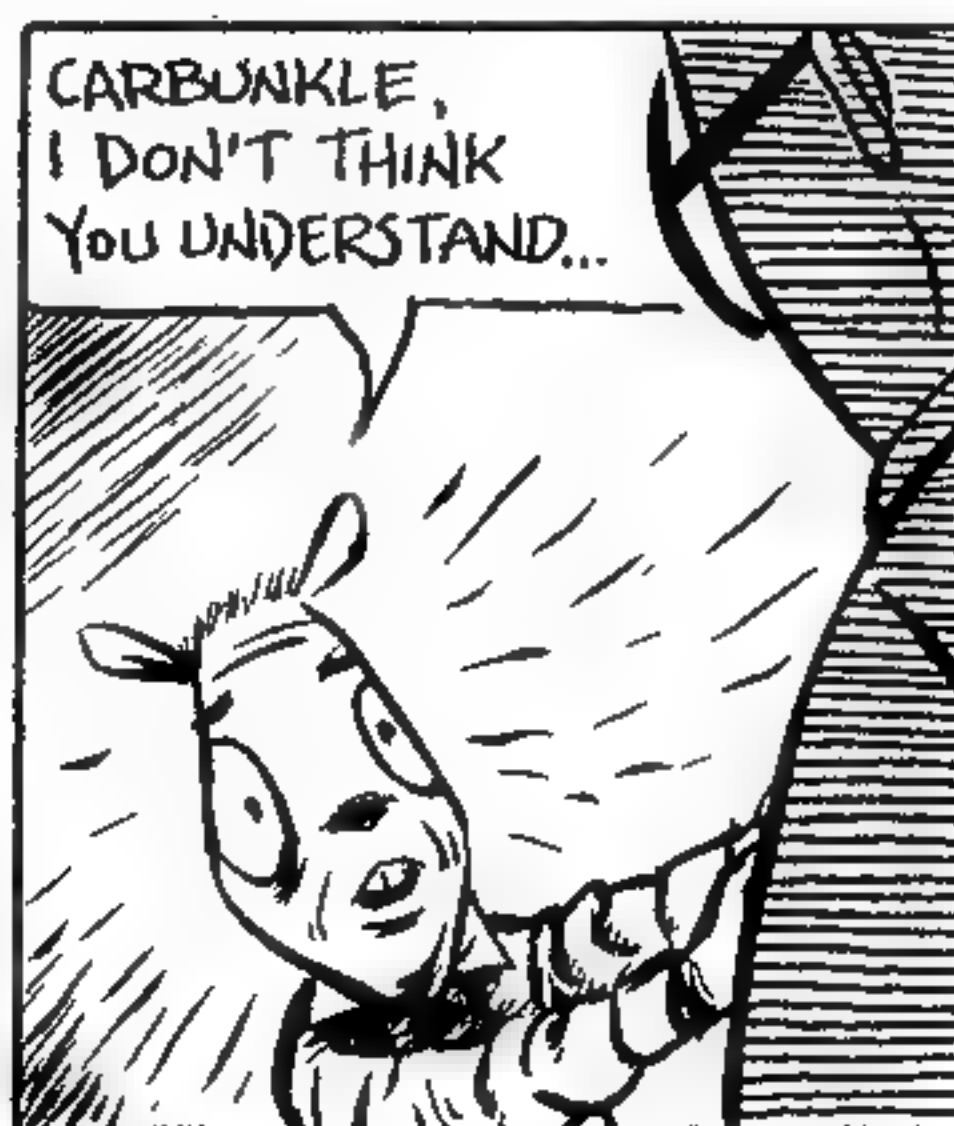
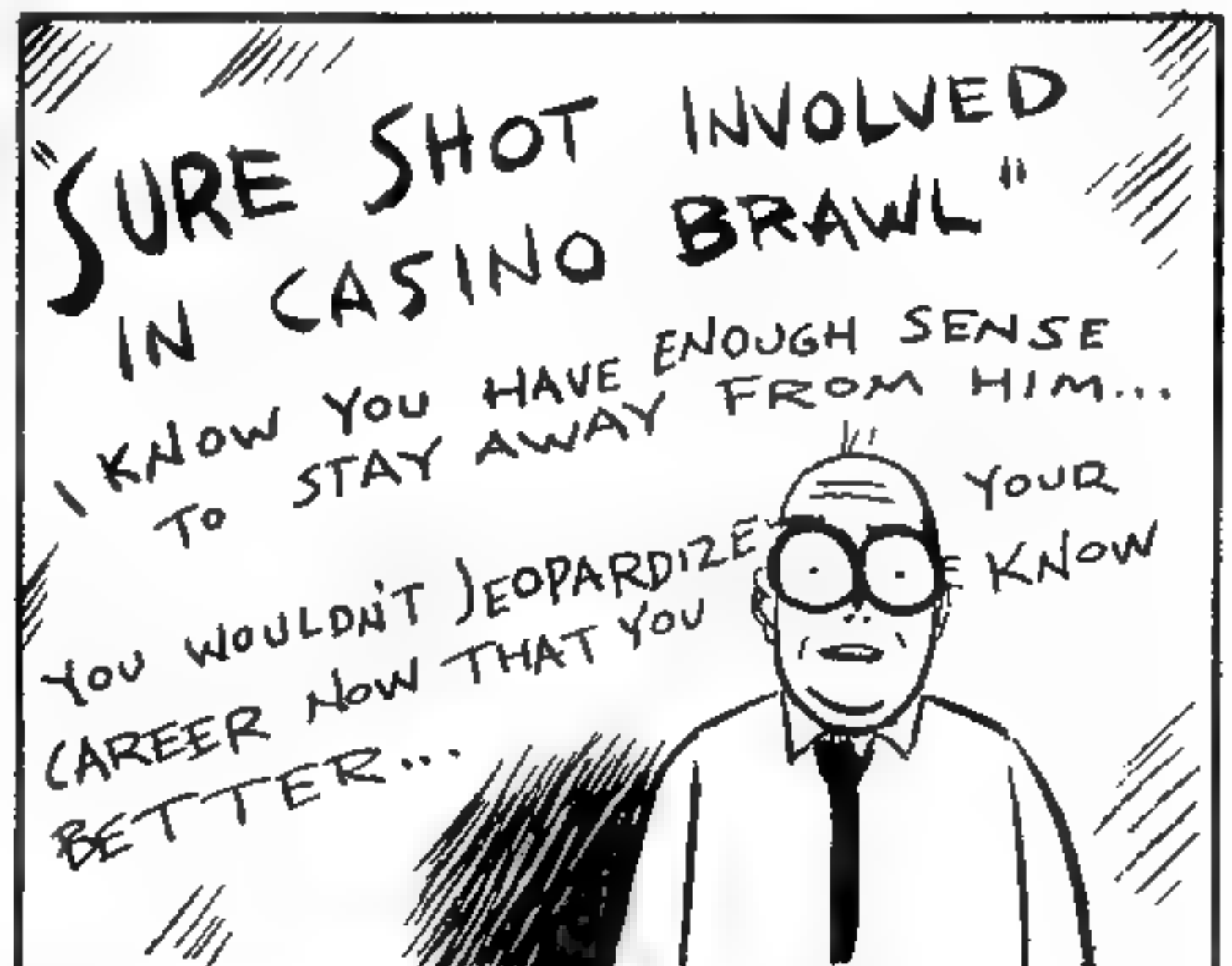






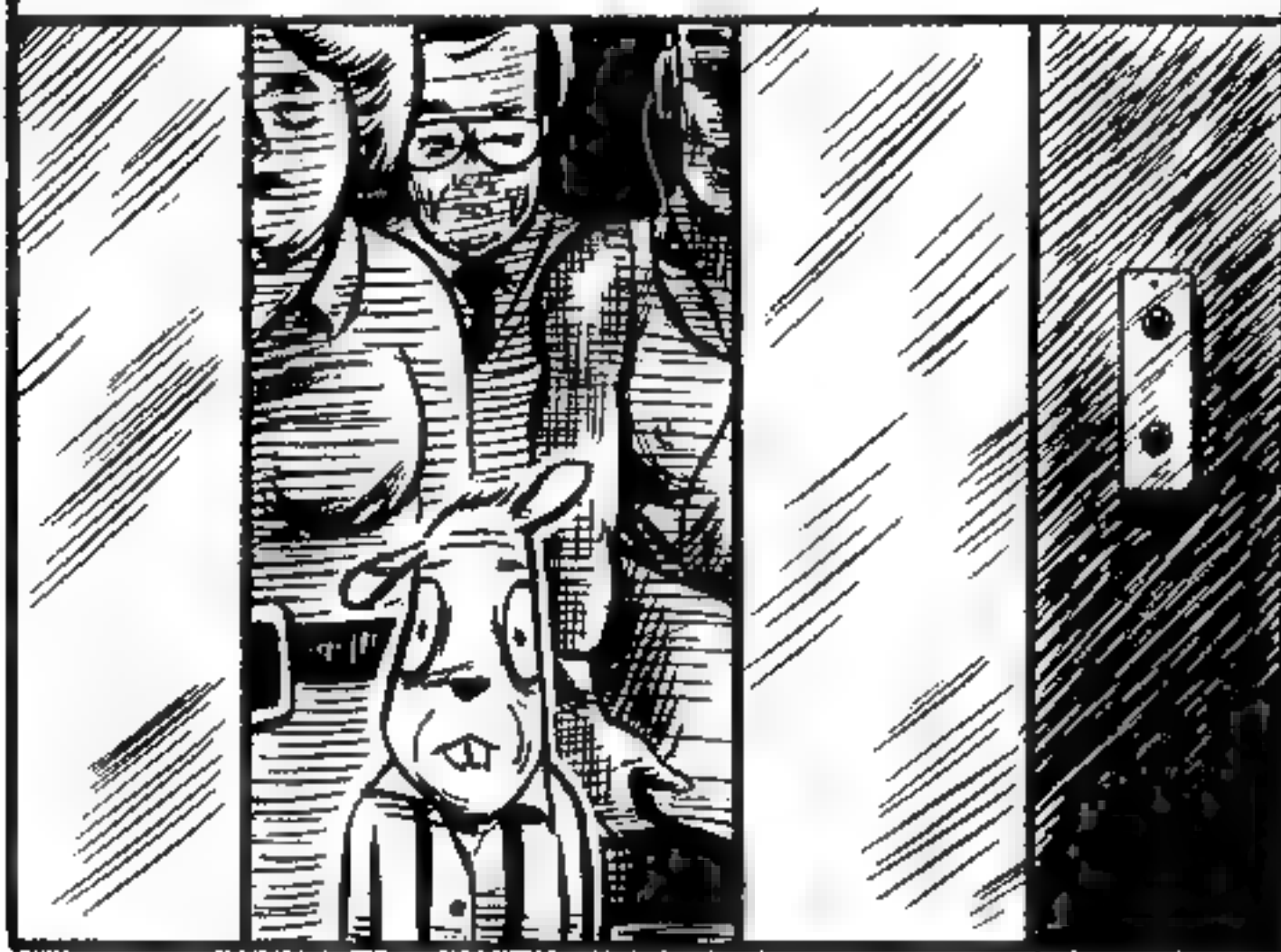








'KELCOG IS SOLD ON MY PROJECT! ...NO, NOT YET, BUT I'LL REACH HIM SOON. IT'S DESTINY!'



'I GOT TONS OF WORK TO DO, WE'LL TALK TONIGHT... I'M TAKING YOU OUT TO DINNER...'



NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Write: James Sturm
4039 Latona Ave. N.E.
Seattle, WA 98105

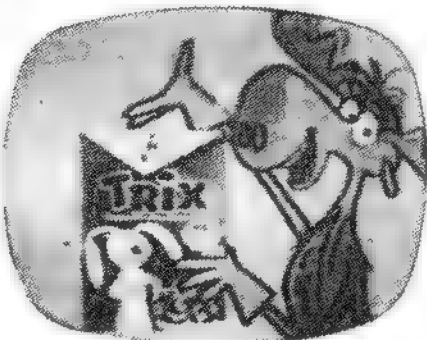
Dear Mr. Sturm,

It's been a long time since I've written to a letter column. Please bear with me if this rambles.

I was born in 1966, a product of the much ignored "Baby Bust." I don't remember much of the early seventies, but my parents tell me that was when they started reading CONSUMER REPORT. They got religion from Ralph Nader, and no longer bought us kids things like coldcuts, soda (except at the movies), or frozen pizza. Any cereal prefixed with the word "Sugar" (or "Honey"), or that changed the color of the milk, or had a prize in the box, was also forbidden. Mom and Dad remember us crying over this loss more than any other.

In second grade, the consumer revolution even filtered down to us in school. We had a teacher named Mrs. Worthington who installed a refrigerator in our classroom, taught us to make pretzels

especially about the cereal. You could wear them out at dinner when they were tired or eat what you wanted at school for lunch, free from supervision, but breakfast was strictly policed.



By the time I was ten or eleven, the foods banned in our house had predictably become "forbidden fruit," to be grabbed on the sly at every possible opportunity. Except for the sugared cereals that seemed, well, unnerving. I'd embarrass friends at these post-slumberparty breakfasts; They couldn't understand my inability to deal with pink milk and/or blue marshmallows. In turn, they'd come to my house and complain loudly about "kitty litter" and "raw spaghetti" cereals. My conversion—no pun intended—was total.

Fifteen years later it remains in place. I eat far too much junk to qualify for the nuts-and-berries crowd, but sugared cereals are not in my arsenal.

Am I the ideal audience for the Cereal Killings? Before reading it, the last time I considered the grotesque nature of "Sugar Duds" and their ilk was nearly five years ago. I was living in New York City and went to the Jay Ward Festival at the Museum of Broadcasting. Along with some terrific Rocky and Bullwinkle cartoons, they ran several of the spots Ward did for General Mills. They were aimed toward a generation only ten years my senior, but the difference in tone was startling.

These ads were proud of their sugar content. In roughly ten years, we'd gone from a cereal (Jets, I believe) which had the motto "Super-Sugar Charged!" to the cereals of my childhood, where ad men hid the sugar by calling it "honey" or the truly benign-sounding "Good Food Energy." To my adult, Reagan-battered, art-student brain, the whole thing was creepy.

All this is what helps your tale

hold my attention. I don't mean to imply that the spare, atmospheric drawings and mystery/horror/tragicomic overtones of the story have nothing to do with it. Still, some children were scared of clowns, but it was BURT and his ilk that made me nervous as a kid. For less primal reasons they still do. There's something both wildly funny yet weirdly painful in your vision of those frogs, tigers, elephants, etc., as living beings, damaged and perhaps destroyed by the products that "made them."

Is this a limited or ongoing series? Are you telling a mystery story, with the kind of structure the genre implies? Or trailing the characters as they (to quote Tom Lehrer) "go their sordid and separate ways," which implies a different tone/structure altogether?

Okay, that's it. Excuse me while I break out the Shredded Wheat and the 1% milk. Your book is enjoyable. Can't wait to see more.

Thanks for your kind attention.

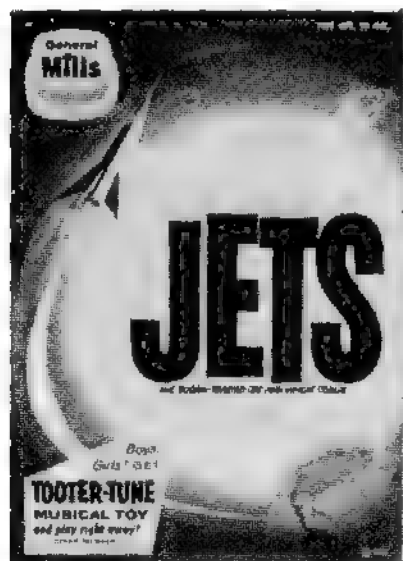
Amy Sacks
Portland, OR.

Dear Amy,
Thanks for your thoughtful letter. We obviously grew up under similar circumstances, although I never got invited to slumber parties. This is indeed a limited series. And by the way, why don't you try some soy milk on that Shredded Wheat. It's really quite tasty.



Correction:

Last issue's beautiful back cover was not done by Mike Lang, but rather Mark Lang. His talents are again on display this issue, providing the color for the front cover.



and orange juice, and had us bring in empty food boxes (including cereal) so she could teach us how to read the nutritional information on the side. As my siblings and I got older, we often pined for junk food and complained to Mom and Dad that our cereal (Puffed Wheat, Puffed Rice, plain Cornflakes in the summer, Oatmeal or Wheatena in the Winter) was "dull." But they were steadfast,

THE TEAM HADN'T WON A GAME IN 4½ WEEKS...WE WERE DEAD LAST, 16 GAMES OUT. WE WERE IN DIRE STRAITS... WE WERE IN A TERRIBLE...

S L U M P

STORY & LAYOUT
JAMES STURM

DRAWING & INKS
WARD SUTTON



THANKS TO "GIG" WILSON FOR ADDITIONAL ARTISTIC SUPPORT

A YEAR AGO, I'D LED THE TEAM IN RBIS. NOW I WASN'T EVEN HITTIN' MY OWN WEIGHT. I'D HAD 2 HITS IN MY LAST 63 AT BATS...



AFTER A MONTH OF LOSSES, A RAINOUT SEEMED LIKE A VICTORY!



OUR STOPPER, RICK RISER, MISSED HIS LAST FOUR STARTS DUE TO A SORE ARM.



THINGS WERE TENSE, THE FANS RUTHLESS. OUR MANAGER, BUZZ FRAZIER, WAS UNDER A LOT OF PRESSURE TO WIN.



WHAT THE @!\$%! WERE YOU @!\$% LOOKIN' AT?! ARE YOU @!\$% BLIND?!!



BUZZ WAS REALLY UNLOADING ON THE UMP! I'D NEVER SEEN HIM SO WOUND UP. MAYBE HE WAS TRYING TO LIGHT A FIRE AND GET THE TEAM GOING...



THE UMP WASN'T IMPRESSED AND JUST AS HE WAS GOING TO EJECT BUZZ FROM THE GAME..



BUZZ DROPPED DEAD.



"STUBBY" REYNOLDS, THE THIRD BASE COACH, WAS NAMED MANAGER...



RISER WENT TO THE MOUND THAT NIGHT AND PITCHED A TWO HITTER!



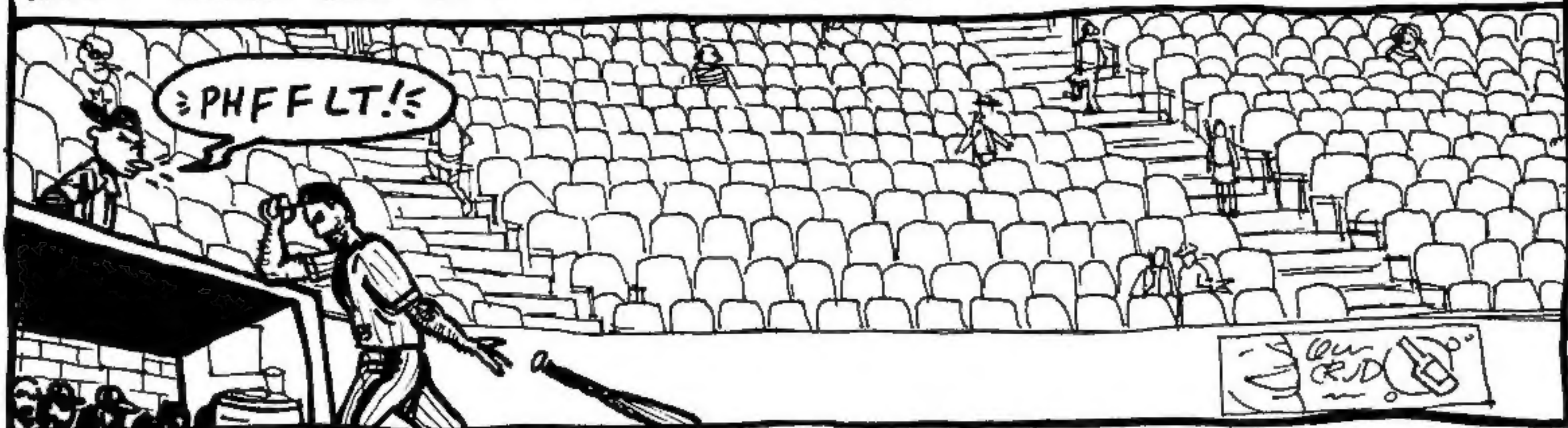
I HIT A 3-RUN HOMER AND WE WON FOUR TO NOTHING!!



FROM THE CELEBRATION AFTER THE GAME YOU'D HAVE THOUGHT WE'D WON THE WORLD SERIES!



OUR CELEBRATION WAS SHORT-LIVED, HOWEVER. WE WENT ON TO LOSE OUR NEXT THREE GAMES. I WENT ONE FOR TWELVE.





STUBBY WAS FOUND BLUDGEONED TO DEATH. THE WEAPON: A LOUISVILLE SLUGGER.



SURE ENOUGH, WE STARTED TO WIN AGAIN! I WAS ON TO SOMETHING HERE. THERE WOULD BE NO MORE SLUMPS!



IN THE NEXT TWO MONTHS WE WENT FROM DEAD LAST TO THREE GAMES OUT. I WAS MURDERING THE BALL, HITTING OVER .400!



IT WAS THE LAST THREE GAMES OF THE SEASON. WE WERE TWO GAMES BACK AND THE FIRST PLACE STALLIONS WERE COMIN' TO TOWN. I WASN'T TAKIN' ANY CHANCES.

ART, COULD I HAVE A WORD WITH YOU?

SURE, WILLIE, C'MON IN...



I'M JUST FILLING OUT THE LINE-UP FOR TOM -- UGH!



THE BAT BROKE! I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT-- FILLED WITH CORK! NO WONDER OUR SHORTSTOP, CORTEZ, HAD BEEN PUNCHING OUT ALL THOSE HOMERS!

GROAN...



SO I WAS FLUSHED OUT... CAUGHT RED HANDED. DONE IN BY A CORKED BAT...

W...WILLIE, IT'S YOU... HOW COULD YOU...?



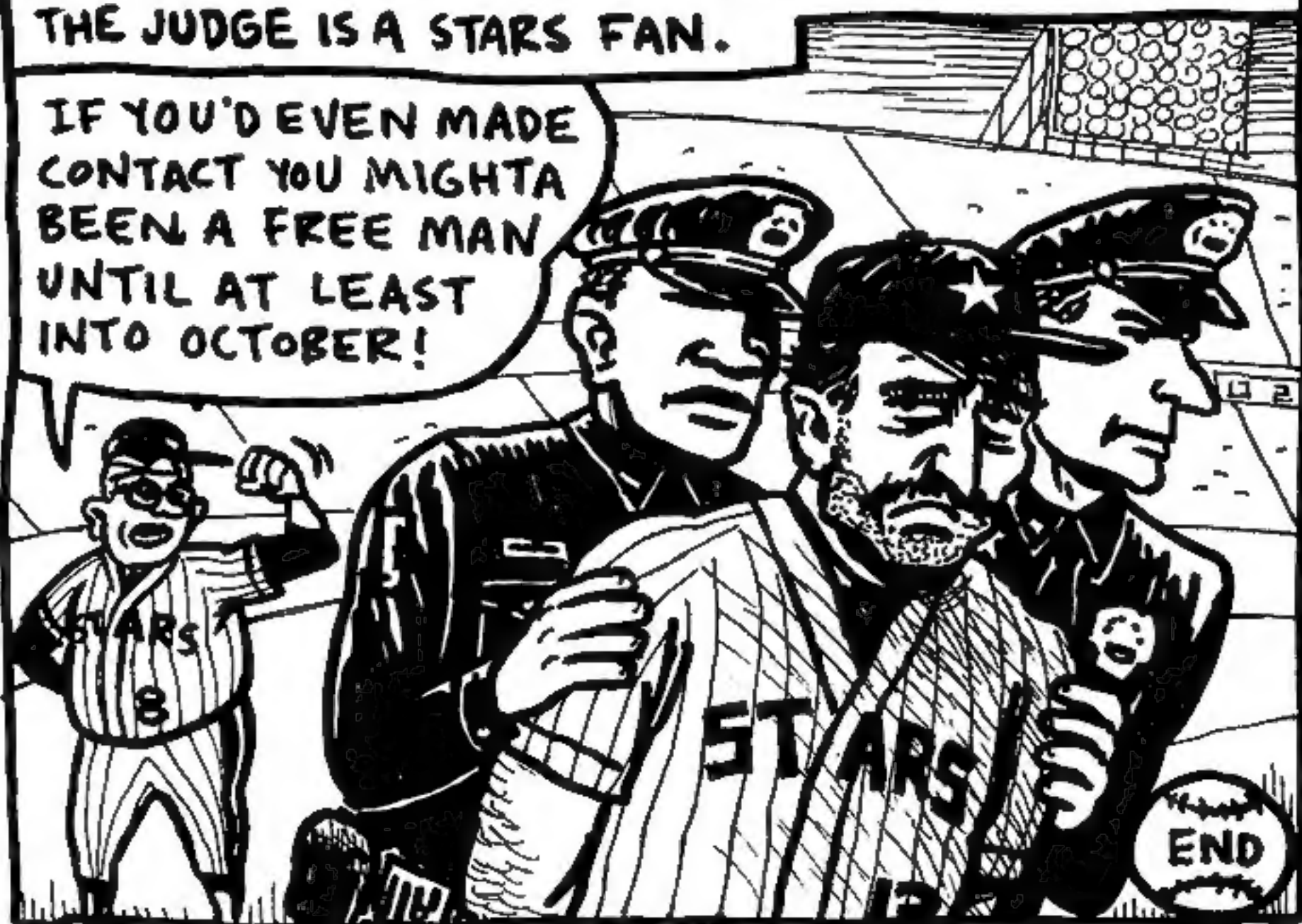
TO MY SURPRISE, ART DIDN'T TURN ME IN. WITH FIRST PLACE ON THE LINE, HE NEEDED ME IN THE LINE-UP. GOD BLESS THAT MAN, HE WANTS TO WIN.

C'MON, WILLIE, HIT ONE OUT!



I STRUCK OUT FIVE TIMES THAT GAME AND WE LOST 2-1. THAT WAS OUR SEASON. I HOPE THE JUDGE IS A STARS FAN.

IF YOU'D EVEN MADE CONTACT YOU MIGHTA BEEN A FREE MAN UNTIL AT LEAST INTO OCTOBER!



the CEREAL KILLINGS

the victims



the Frog

Dougie was overweight and unfulfilled, but was his heart attack due to too many bowls of cereal or something even more sinister?



the Bird

His sugary cereal sent Keiler sky-high, his insulin crashing down. Was it only a matter of time before he was grounded for good?



the Dog

Cereal was only the start for Horrace—selling kids wear, comic books, and toys gave him wealth and fame. He seemed to have every reason to live—but if so, why suicide?

**Who is responsible?
Can it be stopped?**

Starring:

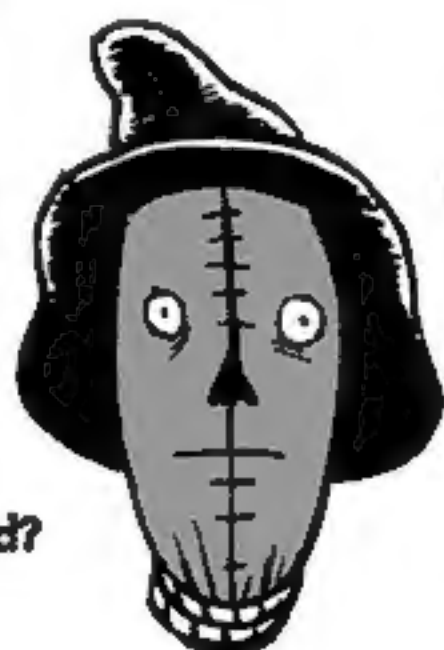
All his life Carbunkle has sold cereal and thought of himself as an average Joe; is he ready to confront a killer?



Schmedly and Charlie "the Chimp" Kessler, one-time cereal giants, now a fading memory. Your options are few when you've hit rock bottom.

and:

What about the mysterious scarecrow? Is he the answer to the breakfast industry's declining fortunes? Is he Carbunkle's personal savior? A looney tune? Can he even be found?



It's the present! It's nostalgic! It's murder! It's a crispy non-sweetened comix story that doesn't get soggy in milk! And remember—product is sold by weight, not volume. Some unsettling may occur.

also



the Rabbit

Crass and outspoken, is Burt the only one that knows the score?



the Critter

In debt and in trouble, if Shirland's not careful his job won't be the only thing he loses.



the Elf

Snip, president of Kelcog and reigning breakfast king; will he do anything to keep his crown?

ALL THIS AND MORE IN EACH AND EVERY ISSUE OF JAMES STURM'S
CEREAL KILLINGS

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